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HIP

Honors In Practice

A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

***HIP* Now and *HIP* Then**

Volume 14 | 2018



Honors in Practice

A PUBLICATION OF THE
National Collegiate Honors Council

JOURNAL EDITOR

Ada Long

University of Alabama at Birmingham

The National Collegiate Honors Council is an association of faculty, students, and others interested in honors education.

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EDITORIAL POLICY

Honors in Practice (HIP) publishes articles about innovative practices in individual honors programs and nuts-and-bolts issues of concern to the members of the National Collegiate Honors Council. *HIP* employs a double-blind peer review system. Essays should present ideas and/or practices that will be useful to other honors administrators and faculty, not just descriptions of “what we do at our institution.” Essays should advance a thesis located within a larger context such as theoretical perspectives, trends in higher education, or historical background. Essays should also demonstrate an awareness of previous honors discussions of the topic.

Submissions and inquiries should be directed to Ada Long at <adalong@uab.edu>.

DEADLINE

HIP is published annually. The deadline for submissions is January 1.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

1. We accept material by email attachment in Word (not pdf). We do not accept material by fax or hard copy.
2. If documentation is used, the documentation style can be whatever is appropriate to the author's primary discipline or approach (MLA, APA, etc.), but please avoid footnotes. Internal citation to a list of references (bibliography) is strongly preferred, and the editor will revise all internal citations in accordance with MLA guidelines.
3. There are no minimum or maximum length requirements; the length should be dictated by the topic and its most effective presentation.
4. Accepted essays are edited for grammatical and typographical errors and for infelicities of style or presentation. Authors have ample opportunity to review and approve edited manuscripts before publication.

DEDICATION



Katherine E. Bruce

Kate Bruce has been a smart and insightful, stalwart and gracious guiding force in the National Collegiate Honors Council for almost two decades. Since earning her PhD at the University of Georgia in 1984, she has spent her professional career at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, where she is now Professor of Psychology and Director of the Honors College. In her 2007 NCHC presidential speech at the annual conference, Kate emphasized the importance of bringing multiple disciplinary insights into the field of honors, and she used her substantial background in experimental psychology, especially animal behavior, to posit what she found significant in honors education. She concluded, “Unexpected, unanticipated, interdisciplinary: these features, once we have homed in on how to ask a question correctly, help us determine the significance of honors.” Kate has brought these values into the fields of both psychology and honors.

Although, as Kate pointed out in her speech, statistics are only part of what matters in determining significance, the numbers tell an interesting story about Kate’s scholarship, teaching, and service. She has, for instance, given 60 conference presentations on honors, published 30 articles in refereed

publications related to her academic disciplines, and supervised 21 undergraduate honors projects; these are but a fraction of her total contributions to honors scholarship. The CASE/Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching acknowledged her excellence as a teacher in selecting her as the North Carolina Professor of the Year in 2008. And we have all benefited from her outstanding service as a board member, vice president, president-elect, president, and past president of the NCHC as well as, since 2014, co-chair of Beginning in Honors.

The facts and data tell an important story about Kate, but her professional, moral, and personal significance to the NCHC and to the broader field of honors emanates from her respectful leadership, her quiet but forceful presence, and her unflagging devotion to students and colleagues. We reflect that devotion back to her in dedicating this volume of *Honors in Practice* to Katherine E. Bruce.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: *HIP NOW, HIP THEN*

Ada Long

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

This volume of *Honors in Practice* contains essays both new and old, demonstrating the variety of subjects and approaches that have characterized the journal since its outset and also suggesting some realignment over time toward a greater focus on research and objective analysis. This trend perhaps reflects the increasing professionalization of honors since the inaugural volume of *HIP* in 2005.

HIP Now

The volume begins with four new essays that spotlight curricular innovations, study abroad, and interactions between honors administrators and students' families. All offer practical ideas in the context of previous literature and current realities.

In the first essay, "Including Families in the Honors Experience," Melissa L. Johnson of the University of Florida makes a persuasive case for developing formal structures to connect families with honors programs. Acknowledging that most honors administrators complain about helicopter parents, Johnson cites research showing that family involvement—"family" being a broadly inclusive term here—has a positive impact on the social wellbeing and academic performance of students. She describes various kinds of family-oriented initiatives currently in practice before describing such programs at the University of Florida, which include, for instance, family weekends, Facebook groups, annual giving campaigns, and orientation break-out groups. Johnson describes the benefits that these activities have had for students, families, and the honors program at the University of Florida and suggests ways to implement them in other honors programs.

The other three new essays focus on improving the honors experience for students. In "Hearing the Marginalized Voice in the Great Books Curriculum," Jennie Woodard describes diversifying a Great Books curriculum at the University of Maine, constructing "a set of pedagogical tools that encourage students to hear voices in the texts that otherwise might be silenced." This initiative resulted from students' observations in their end-of-semester reflective essays that they "wanted more women, more texts produced by people of color, more non-European narratives, more attention paid to class systems."

In addition to adding and contextualizing new texts, Woodard describes deploying an intersectional lens so that students “see beyond a monolithic oppression against an identity population or a particular -ism (sexism, racism, etc.) and understand that oppression is increasingly complex the more identity markers are included in a social issue.” She provides detailed instructions and an illustration of how to provide an intersectional approach to redeem and enrich a Great Books curriculum.

In “Student Preferences for Faculty-Led Honors Study Abroad Experiences,” Nicholas R. Arens, Hanna Holmquist, and Rebecca C. Bott-Knutson describe the interdisciplinary model for study abroad in the Fishback Honors College at South Dakota State University (SDSU). After a literature survey on the models and benefits of study abroad, the authors present the results of their recent study of the effectiveness of the SDSU model in terms of location, cost, length, and outcomes. Their findings indicate, for instance, that the most important factor for students was cost and the least was the faculty leaders. The survey also showed “a positive correlation between our program’s interdisciplinary focus and students’ desires for an interdisciplinary study abroad experience in honors.” The results generally reinforced other research on study abroad, such as the preference for Europe as a destination, and it confirmed the desirability for their students of the model they had developed at SDSU.

The last of the current essays is “A Structured Course for Personal and Professional Development,” in which Deirdre D. Ragan describes the attempt “to intertwine career exploration and academic advising within a defined curriculum” at The Citadel. After summarizing best practices for career readiness, academic advising, and career counseling, Ragan argues that “college students are well-served by a mandatory, credit-bearing, four-year course of study that synthesizes key aspects of academic and career counseling into one setting” and describes in detail what such a curriculum might look like. She then describes the implementation of such a curriculum in The Citadel Honors Program’s Personal and Professional Development plan. She outlines components of the plan, describes the success of the course model, provides student testimonials, and contends that “combined with a rigorous undergraduate curriculum, [the plan] produces a mature, critical thinker who is poised for a successful career.”

HIP Then

While the current essays generally look ahead to suggested improvements in honors education, we now take the opportunity to look backward at

some of the finest examples of essays from the first ten years of *Honors in Practice*. These essays, too, suggest improvements for honors, representing some of the journal's best ideas and insights. The essays also combine to form a retrospective panorama of national and international thinking about careers, curricula, technology, philosophy, experiential learning, STEM disciplines, arts, and humanities.

The essays appear in chronological order, starting with the inaugural issue in 2005. The author of the first essay, Rosalie Otero, represents her own kind of inauguration as the first faculty member in the country to be tenured in honors, a distinction that has become far more common in the world of honors today. Her essay, "Tenure and Promotion in Honors," describes the value of an interdisciplinary faculty that has the legitimacy and self-sufficiency enjoyed in the traditional academic disciplines. Based on her experience at the University of New Mexico, she argues that granting tenure and promotion in honors represents a serious commitment to interdisciplinary teaching in an educational climate that, in 2005, undervalued both teaching and interdisciplinarity. As a pioneer in this rare new kind of honors environment, Otero provides advice for others following this path.

The second essay (2006) is one of *HIP*'s first international publications: "Honors in Chile: New Engagements in the Higher Education System" by Juan Carlos Skewes, then of the Universidad Austral de Chile, Carlos Alberto Cioce Sampaio of the Universidade Regional de Blumenau, and Frederick J. Conway of San Diego State University. The authors developed an honors program at the Universidad Austral de Chile (UACH) that was adapted to the challenges of a rural setting, rainy weather, and poorly prepared students. Funded by the Chilean Ministry of Education, the program addressed national concerns about inequities in education in a setting that provided a living laboratory for environmental studies. The honors program was part of a larger agenda "to bring together faculty from the natural and social sciences to study environmental problems and contribute to policy making at the national and local levels." This innovative, context-based program should still be an inspiration for new honors programs elsewhere, including the United States.

The next essay (2007) is the earliest—and still one of too few—descriptions of integrating honors into a professional school. As honors administrators know, the accreditation requirements of professional schools present often insurmountable obstacles to student participation in honors programs, and engineering is typically the most challenging of all. One of several options for

honors students in engineering at the University of Pittsburgh was created in 1980 and is described by Michael Giazzone in “The Fessenden Honors in Engineering Program.” This program was an outstanding model for meeting the challenge of integrating honors and engineering successfully but was, alas, phased out in 2012 when Giazzone left the honors college. Nevertheless, honors administrators might do well to forward copies of this essay to their deans of engineering.

Honors in Practice has from time to time published especially memorable speeches or conference presentations, and the next three essays are examples written by three of the most influential figures in the history of honors. The first is Bernice Braid’s “Majoring in the Minor: A Closer Look at Experiential Learning” in 2008. For those unfamiliar with Braid’s work, or for those who have taken part in some of the many City as Text™ experiences, honors semesters, or honors institutes she has organized over the past five decades, this essay provides a compact introduction to her theoretical perspective and an overview of experiential learning as Braid has developed and promulgated it throughout her career. She argues here and always that “explorers who see themselves as natives in a new land are engaged. . . . [E]verywhere they go, even to books they have read before or hometowns they thought they wanted to escape, they have what it takes to see more than they did before and to feel the power of being able to create their own new pathways in any setting.”

Samuel Schuman’s 2009 essay “Ending in Honors” addresses the fundamental questions of whether, when, how, and why an honors director or dean can best leave honors behind. With his usual civility and humor, Schuman speaks to those who plan, sooner or later, to retire from honors and gives sound advice on how to depart with good will toward and from their academic communities. As I noted in that issue of *HIP*, “A reader who is not yet far enough along to consider retirement would be wise to file this essay in a safe place; those who are about to retire should study it line by line; those who have already retired can discover what they did wrong and maybe even right.” Characteristically, Sam’s observations about retiring with grace can be extrapolated to insights about living graciously. Sam led the way for all of us by exemplifying grace and wisdom—even, alas, in endings.

Providing what might be a fitting companion piece to Schuman’s essay, Ted L. Estess—Sam’s close companion and fellow leader of Beginning in Honors—contributes his own grace and wisdom in “Becoming Part of a Story” (2010). In a moving contemplation of his long (at that time, thirty-one years) and distinguished career in honors, Estess tells a story about the

pattern of his life and all our lives, in which a future that seems random and risky produces a past both coherent and meaningful. In Ted's case, the story was far from over, and his future has contained many more years of teaching in the University of Houston Honors College, even unto this day. At any stage of our own stories and careers in honors, we can find wisdom in Ted's story as it mirrors the confusion and clarity of all our lives. Above all, the essay is great fun to read; Ted always spins a fine yarn.

As honors has moved into the tech world, submissions to *HIP* have increasingly focused on using online resources to enhance not just the classroom experience but all components of college life. In "Designing a Collaborative Blog about Student Success" (2011), Melissa L. Johnson, Alexander S. Plattner, and Lauren Hundley describe a strategy for facilitating student collaboration in honors. In the third semester of a four-course sequence at the University of Florida called Honors Professional Development, the students design, implement, and maintain an ongoing blog and vblog (video blog) to facilitate first-year students' successful involvement in campus and community life. In addition to individual blogs set up by each of the students throughout the course sequence, these blogs are a collaborative project to help first-year students succeed in college by, for instance, finding places to study, communicating with their professors, writing résumés, and managing their time effectively. The blogs helped new students and, perhaps even more, the students who created them, who learned about online skills, research, and teamwork.

A recent innovation in the NCHC's longtime commitment to experiential education has been the very popular and successful Partners in the Parks program, which was created in 2008 as a brainchild of Joan Digby. In "Honoring the National Parks: A Local Adaptation of a Partners in the Parks Adventure" (2012), Digby and Kathleen Nolan describe an NCHC Partners in the Parks program hosted by LIU Post—"From Fire Island to Ellis Island"—and the spinoff from it of a course called "Honoring the Parks" at St. Francis College. As the authors explain, "Like NCHC's City as Text™, Partners in the Parks appears to be developing a life of its own generating creative permutations that evolve naturally from local sites and participating institutions." The essay illustrates the way that NCHC-sponsored programs can spread from a single experience into multiple innovations at local and national levels. The authors also reveal the new energy to be gained by partnering with professionals outside of academia, in this case National Park Services rangers.

Over the years, *HIP* essays have inspired us to create new active learning experiences nationally and internationally, to develop new classroom strategies, to try new technologies, and to find new ways to improve honors education. From time to time we also publish essays that inspire us to be the best students, teachers, administrators, and people that we can be. Such an essay is “‘In Landlessness Alone Resides the Highest Truth’; or, At Sea with Honors” (2013) by Don Dingleline of the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. This eloquent, intricate, allusive, and ingenious essay likens the risky adventure of honors education to the dangerous quest for truth undertaken by Ishmael in *Moby-Dick*. Honors programs, like the *Pequod*, propel students beyond the familiar lands of their majors and professional goals, sending them out to sea where, like Ishmael, they examine that big whale of Truth from all angles, traditions, and disciplines, always seeking but never quite grasping the unknown and the unknowable. Dingleline describes models of honors education that exemplify the highest ideals of community, interdisciplinarity, integrity, and truth-seeking, connecting these ideals to our individual and collective survival. He inspires us to practice and cherish honors “not by clinging to the ‘slavish shore’ but by heading out to sea.”

We conclude our celebration of the first ten years of *Honors in Practice* with a focus on the sciences. In “Ask Me about ISON: The Risks and Rewards of Teaching an Interdisciplinary Honors Course on a Scientific Event Unfolding in Real Time” (2014), William L. Vanderburgh and Martin Ratcliffe describe an honors course they taught at Wichita State University on the comet ISON. Ratcliffe, a planetarium astronomer, and Vanderburgh, a philosopher of science, gambled that ISON would be a major astronomical event of the twenty-first century and designed a course for the fall of 2013 that they could make up as they went along while following the progress of the comet. When the comet fizzled toward the end of the semester, they and their students learned that failure can be as interesting as success in studying an ongoing event in astronomy or in any other field; the unfolding narrative and the kinds of resources that lead to a thorough study of an event-in-progress lend excitement and drama to a course no matter what the outcome. The authors offer many good ideas, projects, models, and resources for generating such an interdisciplinary course.

The first decade of *Honors in Practice* reveals the truth of a passage written by Proust and quoted by Don Dingleline: “The only true voyage would be found not in traveling to strange lands but in having different eyes, in seeing the universe with the eyes of another person, of a hundred others, and seeing

the hundred universes each of them sees, which each of them is.” Each of the essays included here gives the reader new eyes, and collectively they suggest hundreds of ways of seeing, hundreds of universes to see—and this is what honors education is all about.

Honors in Practice

HIP NOW

Including Families in the Honors Experience

MELISSA L. JOHNSON

University of Florida

Countless articles in the news, combined with colorful anecdotes from faculty and staff, share common complaints about helicopters, lawnmowers, bulldozers, and snowplows—not transportation options on campus but rather parents of college students who stay actively involved in their students' lives. Honors faculty and administrators are tempted to dismiss this involvement as unnecessary and burdensome. We even have the backing of federal law via the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which dictates what we can and cannot share about a student's educational record with parents. At the University of Florida, though, rather than keeping our distance from parents and family members, we have opted to embrace the strengths of parental involvement by including them in our honors program. Working as true partners while always mindful of FERPA regulations, we have enhanced our efforts to open lines of communication with the goal of helping our students be successful. Given the parent and family involvement in higher education, examination of current institutional and honors initiatives can provide direction for honors administrators as they negotiate interactions with their students' families.

PARENTS AND FAMILIES OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

The frequent descriptors of parents as helicopters and the like generally represent only the extremes of parent behavior. Wartman and Savage defined parent involvement as

showing interest in the lives of their students in college, gaining more information about college, knowing when and how to appropriately provide encouragement and guidance to their student connecting with the institution, and potentially retaining that institutional connection beyond the college years. (5)

Research has shown the positive impacts of parental involvement in the lives of college students, which include providing financial assistance (Carney-Hall), motivating students to succeed academically (Sanchez, Reyes, & Singh), and easing the transition to college (Kolkhorst, Yazidjian, & Toews). The favorable outcomes associated with this involvement include a greater sense of emotional wellbeing (Sax & Weintraub), student development support (Taub), and greater social satisfaction with the institution (Harper, Sax, & Wolf).

Conventional research and practice related to parental involvement has neglected a wide variety of familial structures due to a narrow focus on White, middle-class parents (Wolf, Sax, & Harper). Recently, though, higher education terminology has expanded to be more inclusive of family involvement beyond traditional parents. Families include legal guardians, extended family such as grandparents and siblings, unmarried partners, and caregivers in addition to parents (Daniel, Evans, & Scott; Kiyama et al.). Through these important inclusions, we recognize that many college students have a familial support system beyond just their parents (Kiyama et al.).

PARENT AND FAMILY INITIATIVES

Targeted parent and family initiatives have had a presence on college campuses for many years now. In the 1990s, Administrators Promoting Parent Involvement (APPI) began hosting an annual national conference to bring together staff who worked specifically with parents in either a student affairs or development context (Daniel, Evans, & Scott). In 2003, the University of Minnesota began a biennial survey of college and university parent and family programs (Savage & Petree). Then in 2008, the Association of Higher Education Parent/Family Program Professionals (AHEPPP) was founded to

serve those who support family involvement on college campuses. AHEPPP's resources include national and regional conferences, a peer-reviewed journal, and research on parent and family programs. Membership includes more than 180 institutions (AHEPPP). In 2010, the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) added standards for parent and family programs based on AHEPPP's recommendations.

Other examples of parent and family initiatives in higher education associations include a Parent and Family Relations Knowledge Community through Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA); a Parent & Family Network through the Association for Orientation, Transition, and Retention in Higher Education (NODA); and parent fundraising resources through the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE).

Examples of early institutional initiatives included parent/family handbooks, orientation programs, and parent and family weekends (Daniel, Evans, & Scott; Simmons). Dedicated resources have emerged through websites dedicated to parents/families, help lines or email addresses, and offices focusing on the parent/family relationship (Daniel, Evans, & Scott). These specific contacts can help route parents and families to appropriate campus resources and alleviate the tendency to call the president for issues of minor concern (Cutright).

According to the most recent National Survey of College and University Parent Programs (n=223) (Savage and Petree), slightly more than half of parent and family program offices report to student affairs (52.8%) while almost a third report to advancement and/or foundation offices (29.2%). Of the programs represented in the survey, only 15.4% started prior to 1989. More than 38% of respondents had full-time responsibility for coordinating parent and family programs. Common services and programming for parents and families included websites (100%), email responses (100%), phone responses (98.3%), parent/family orientations (98.2%), parent/family weekends (94.7%), email newsletters (94.7%), and social media (88.1%). Since the 2013 survey, the largest increase in parent/family resources has been on Facebook (+13.8%) while the largest decrease has been managing a non-advisory parent/family association (-11.5%). Emerging initiatives are providing materials for non-English-speaking/international parents and families as well as campus crisis management and emergency response notification.

The University of Florida has a campus-wide focus on providing resources and support to parents and families. The Office of New Student and Family

Programs coordinates many of these programs, including orientation, family weekend, a parent and family association, and regularly scheduled online chats. An email newsletter is sent to members of the parent and family association while all families have access to a dedicated website, email address, staff member, and limited-access Facebook groups.

The advancement office directs annual giving campaigns on behalf of the academic colleges and units. These campaigns target families in addition to alumni and friends. The foundation collaborates with the Division of Student Affairs to manage the Parent and Family Leadership Council, with each family (10 new families annually) committing an annual gift of \$5000 in addition to service as an advocate and ambassador for the university. The alumni association partners with New Student and Family Programs to provide a joint parent and family association and alumni association membership as well as a legacy pinning ceremony for students of alumni at each family weekend event.

Academic affairs units have also begun outreach to parents and families. Many academic advising offices have developed family-specific websites with tips and resources to support students academically. Common tips include student/advisor and family/advisor communication strategies, academic policies and regulations, academic and career planning, and keys for success. A particular emphasis is supporting students in the selection of their major. While not available at this institution, libraries on other campuses are focusing on parent and family outreach as early as prospective campus tours. The hope is that families will remind students of the resources available in the library when needed (Benjamin & Dermody).

Administrative units such as the student health-career center, bursar's office, financial aid office also include frequently asked questions for parents and family members. As parents and family members continue to engage with college campuses, one should anticipate an increase in resources and support geared toward this population.

HONORS INITIATIVES

For more than a decade we have offered honors-specific programming and resources for our parents and family members in the form of recruitment events, family weekend activities, and annual giving campaigns. Over the past few years we have increased our outreach to families, engaging them as partners in student success.

Established Initiatives

Family Weekend

We have offered an honors event during the university-wide family weekend for more than a decade. Previous events have included a special breakfast, an afternoon reception, a mini-lecture from a current honors instructor, and an evening outdoor carnival. Honors staff and the honors student organizations have both played a role in coordinating events. Our honors ambassadors have been particularly active in developing more social opportunities for families to connect such as the carnival-style events that have included games, honors “swag” prizes, food, and entertainment from an a cappella group. Coordination with the overall family weekend program is essential in not conflicting with major events for all families. Given communication and scheduling challenges, an honors-specific event has not always been possible.

Prospective Visitors

More than a decade ago, our student ambassadors began hosting formal weekly visitation programs for prospective students and families. Instead of making individual appointments for prospective visitors, those interested in the honors program can attend the weekly program, which includes lunch with our ambassadors, a tour of the honors residence hall, and an information session with an honors staff member. Families are also invited to our visitation day for recently admitted students. Both events are coordinated entirely by the honors ambassadors with consultation from the honors staff member who serves as their advisor as well as the program director.

Annual Giving Campaigns

Annual giving campaigns target parents of undergraduate students on campus. Parents of honors students are solicited on behalf of the honors program while parents of non-honors students are solicited for the division of student affairs. The honors program contacts only parents for annual giving because alumni can be solicited only for their academic colleges. The associate director of honors provides an update on the program to the annual-giving calling staff and coordinates with the advancement office to update letters and emails sent to parents.

Recent Initiatives

Facebook Group

In 2013, we created a private Facebook group for families of honors students. The purpose of the group is for parents and family members of honors students to connect with each other as well as for the honors office to share items of interest. We specifically note in the group's description that we cannot discuss a student's academic record with anyone except the student.

We include the link to the Facebook group in the acceptance email to students, asking them to share the group with their families. Word of mouth is another draw to the group. Only family members are added to the group as students have their own honors Facebook groups.

Over the past four years, the group has grown to almost eight hundred members and includes parents and extended family members of current students and alumni. Both the honors director and associate director actively participate in the group by sharing honors announcements and events, answering questions, and referring families to campus and community resources.

Facebook group activity varies by time of year and is especially active after admissions decisions are released. Conversations typically involve scholarship and financial aid questions, orientation preparation, and the honors residence hall. Over the summer, questions about the honors residence hall become more detailed as families start buying room decor and storage. More seasoned family members are essential in helping to answer these questions as they have already taken room measurements and experienced moving a student into the hall. During early honors registration, we get questions about the registration process and how to see an academic advisor. Throughout the fall semester, families of first-year students are concerned about building community, making friends, and getting involved.

Medallion Ceremony

We created a medallion ceremony in 2014 to recognize graduating seniors who had completed honors program requirements. Parents and family members have been invited as guests since the inaugural ceremony. The ceremony has been held a week prior to spring commencement but will be moved to commencement weekend in 2018 to make it easier for families to attend. The medallion ceremony is coordinated by the associate honors director with assistance from student event-planning interns.

Branded Items

Several years ago, we created a special avatar for newly admitted students to share on social media that proclaimed, “Proud New Honors Student.” The avatar was attached to their acceptance email and posted on our major social media sites. After noticing that parents were editing the avatar to reflect their pride in being honors parents, we formally created one for them as well and shared it with their Facebook group. An honors student leader with graphic design skills designed the avatars for our ongoing use.

After requests from parents for their own honors shirts two years ago, we began selling Honors Mom and Honors Dad t-shirts and sweatshirts. We take orders two or three times a year during convenient times for on-campus pick-up: prior to breaks and at the beginning of the fall semester. The link to order items online is posted in their Facebook group. Parents often send us selfies in their honors swag to show their pride in involvement in the program.

Orientation Break-Out Session

In 2017, we debuted an optional break-out session for families during new-student orientation. The university coordinates a parallel orientation program for families during each of the twenty new-student orientation programs, and various campus units host afternoon break-out sessions. Before 2017, new honors students attended a mandatory session about the honors program, academic expectations and requirements, and involvement opportunities with an honors advisor, but the family members did not have a comparable experience to learn about the program.

After observing mixed messages sent to students and families about academic expectations throughout orientation, we decided that face-time with families could help in supporting our aims. The thirty-minute break-out session was advertised in the orientation program and facilitated by the honors director. Families appreciated the opportunity to meet directly with honors staff and better understand the advising and registration process. We intend to continue offering this session in 2018.

Benefits of Including Families

Including families in the honors experience has benefited not only the families but also the students and our honors program.

Families

Families feel both informed about and involved in honors. They gain a new perspective on the students' experience and identify with the honors program. They build a network of other honors families who serve as resources, contacts, and even friends. They also tend to have a more positive view of the honors program once they have that personalized connection.

Students

Students do not always read email, and social media information can get lost in the mix of dog memes and cat videos, so families serve as an additional medium for sharing important dates, deadlines, and opportunities. By learning about honors events and activities, families also have additional conversation prompts with the students. As families network with each other, they can and do connect students with each other.

Honors

Experienced family members serve as a significant resource for new families, often anticipating questions and answering them before they are even asked. They remember answers provided by the honors staff on earlier occasions and share those with new families. Their involvement saves many phone calls and emails to the honors office and other departments on campus. Due to the positive view our engaged families have of the honors program, they help us with recruitment by sharing their experiences with friends who have children in high school. We have also observed an increase in annual giving from our families that might be attributed to increased communication with them.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

As higher education continues to dedicate more resources and support for families of college students, the honors community would be remiss in not participating. Despite the helicopter-parent stereotypes, parenting varies among different populations. We run the risk of excluding students when we exclude their families. Instead, we can harness family engagement to help our students make informed decisions about their undergraduate education. With a tiered approach, we have a stronger foundation for promoting student success.

For those honors programs and colleges without family-specific programming and resources, small, manageable initiatives are the best way to start (Savage & Petree). Staffing within honors to coordinate these initiatives can be a barrier to implementation, so partnerships and collaborations with other departments are essential. Honors student organizations can also assist with some programming, and current families may be willing volunteers as well.

Questions to Consider

- How do you currently engage with families?
- Why do you want to engage with families of honors students?
- Who else on campus is engaging with families?
- Are there partnership opportunities to engage with families?
- How can you adapt current practices to benefit families?
- How can you adapt family initiatives in other departments to benefit your families?
- How do you access parent/family contact information so that you can engage them?
- What funding is available or necessary to develop initiatives for families?

CONCLUSION

We recently asked families to share what has been most helpful about our family Facebook group, which is the most consistently and continuously used resource we offer to families:

- Having direct access and conversation with Honors administrators . . . has been wonderful. It has enabled parents to receive accurate, detailed, and helpful information about Honors courses, policies and opportunities for our students. But additionally, it has really helped create a feeling of community and family which has been priceless!!! “Meeting” other honors families has been great too. Sharing experiences and getting feedback has been very helpful!!!

- The honesty, professionalism and having our questions answered so quickly. Knowing that our children have access to the same team that we do, which is considerably reassuring.
- Sense of community, knowing questions will be answered accurately by administrators, and reading the answers to other people's questions has been extremely informative (because it often touches upon important issues that I, or other parents, might not have been aware of).
- It's very comforting to have a "go to" place for consistent, timely information on topics as wide-ranging as dealing with the flood of 2016, to registration questions, to voicing opinions about upcoming issues or proposed changes.

These comments illustrate many of the benefits of engaging with honors families. Family involvement in college students' lives is not going to decrease, so it makes more sense to harness that involvement for good than to ignore it and hope it will go away. Given the limited information available about parent and family engagement in the honors community, we hope to open new conversations and resource-sharing about involving this important partner in student success.

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Hearing the Marginalized Voice in the Great Books Curriculum

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INTRODUCTION

At the end of a two-year Honors Civilizations sequence based on a Great Books curriculum, students at the University of Maine write a reflective essay that describes their personal and intellectual journey with the texts they have encountered over the previous four semesters. In the creation of this “intellectual portfolio,” the students can describe a theme or narrative that has emerged in their thinking, using not only the texts but the classroom dynamic, weekly lectures, and assignments to demonstrate what they have found most beneficial and/or frustrating in their journey. The first year I read these essays, I encountered deep disappointment in the absence of voices: students wanted more women, more texts produced by people of color, more non-European narratives, more attention paid to class systems. In short, students wanted more than the white Western European male narrative.

As a long-time instructor trained in women's, gender, and sexuality studies, I had already begun to incorporate various pedagogical exercises into the honors classroom to make room for marginalized voices. The essays, however, struck a deep chord. The Great Books curriculum is the historical and pedagogical backbone of many honors programs, yet it has significant limitations in opening doors to underrepresented populations. I had always strived to make my honors classroom a space for intersectional learning and, with each passing year, have constructed a set of pedagogical tools that encourage students to hear voices in the texts that otherwise might be silenced.

TEXTUAL ADDITIONS TO THE GREAT BOOKS CURRICULUM

Faculty in the University of Maine Honors College have long believed that the reflective essay at the end of Civilizations is not just an intellectual portfolio designed for student reflection but also a learning tool for faculty to determine both the breadth and depth of students' desired outcomes for the sequence. Over the years, in addition to staples such as Homer, St. Augustine, Shakespeare, Locke, and Darwin, the curriculum has incorporated more and more texts to represent larger populations. The first semester now includes *Inanna*, Laozi's *Tao Te Ching*, and *Dawnland Voices*, a collection of essays and letters by New England's Native populations. Religious texts in the first two semesters address the three major monotheistic religions with the Torah, the New Testament, and the Qur'an. The third semester begins with a collection of Michel de Montaigne's essays to accompany either *Othello* or *The Tempest* and ends with Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. The final semester covers the end of the nineteenth century to the present, including weeks dedicated to Primo Levi, Frida Kahlo, and a unit on climate change.

The steady increase in appreciation for these notable changes among students' final reflective essays does not imply a simple "add and stir" approach to the curriculum formula. When marginalized voices are relegated to a special week, students tend to express empathy or pity and to distance themselves from the person, identity, or experience central to the narrative. For example, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* might become a narrative in which slavery becomes a historical tragedy that happened a long time ago rather than an oppressive system that shaped the experiences of many generations after abolition. This isolation of a voice speaks more to privilege and less to the need for a more nuanced understanding of difference as a series of complex interactions between "history, power, culture, and ideology" (McLaren in *Multicultural Education* 43).

A text such as *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* readily lends itself to incorporating McLaren's notion of difference. In my classroom, we begin with a discussion of what each person learned about slavery in high school and then move on to what voices they did and did not hear in their past education. We ask why there are not more slave narratives written by women, why we do not discuss the sexual or psychological abuse experienced by slaves as readily as physical abuse, and whether sexual abuse and mental health are only now breaking out of the taboo space they once occupied. Questions such as these become what Paulo Freire calls "problem-posing" education through which the teacher no longer possesses all knowledge and students none (in what Freire calls "banking education"). Into Freire's model of education, students are exposed to "problems relating to themselves in the world and with the world" and "feel increasingly challenged and obliged to respond to that challenge" (81). Discussions of slavery can become discussions of systemic racial and/or sexist oppression that easily connect to the current day. Students often open this door by asking, "Why didn't we learn about her/this in high school?" and "Why don't we talk about this kind of abuse more?" leading to greater questions of inclusion and power structures.

Still, questions remain about treatment of the more traditional texts included in the Great Books. In their final reflective essays, students often ask questions such as "Where are the women?" Students are asking about women as producers of texts: they want more Mary Shelleys and Harriet Jacobses. As a scholar and teacher trained in feminist pedagogy, I appreciate the opportunity the Great Books curriculum gives me to ask such questions about the texts we use in the classroom, which go beyond "Where are the women producers?" to involve a close critical reading of how marginalized populations are addressed or neglected by white Western male authors. Through such questions, I demonstrate to honors students that the absence or minimal representation of an identity group can be just as significant to understanding cultural and social ideologies as their presence. Furthermore, when we use an intersectional lens of analysis in the classroom, we can see how subtle differences among characters or historical agents can give us insight into systemic structures of power and oppression.

INTERSECTIONALITY AND THE GREAT BOOKS CURRICULUM

In her 1994 essay "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," Kimberlé Crenshaw argues that "sameness," i.e., a "color-blind" society, is not the path toward combating

oppression. Instead, liberal ideologies must seek to understand the complexities of differences:

The problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference, as some critics charge, but rather the opposite—that it frequently conflates or ignores intra group differences. In the context of violence against women, this elision of difference is problematic, fundamentally because the violence that many women experience is often shaped by other dimensions of their identities, such as race and class. Moreover, ignoring differences within groups frequently contributes to tension among groups, another problem of identity politics that frustrates efforts to politicize violence against women. Feminist efforts to politicize experiences of women and antiracist efforts to politicize experiences of people of color have frequently proceeded as though the issues and experiences they each detail occur on mutually exclusive terrains. Although racism and sexism readily intersect in the lives of real people, they seldom do in feminist and antiracist practices. And so, when the practices expound identity as “woman” or “person of color” as an either/or proposition, they relegate the identity of women of color to a location that resists telling. (358)

Crenshaw invites her readers to see how the intersection of race and gender serves as a space where the stories of violence against women of color can be told. In the decades following publication of this essay, “intersectionality” has become a term more widely used to encompass issues including but not limited to class, race, ethnicity, religion, education, and sexual and gender identity. However, as Crenshaw reminds us more than two decades later,

Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects. It’s not simply that there’s a race problem here, a gender problem here, and a class or LGBTQ problem there. Many times that framework erases what happens to people who are subject to all of these things. (“Intersectionality”)

As educators, we should help students see beyond a monolithic oppression against an identity population or a particular -ism (sexism, racism, etc.) and understand that oppression is increasingly complex the more identity markers are included in a social issue.

An intersectional lens in the classroom, particularly given the time constraints of a Great Books curriculum, is easy to neglect when students are

digesting a text a week. With so little time to discuss each text, the temptation to under-complicate the material is ever-present. Conversely, to include every intersection might prove confusing for students, leaving them with a feeling that the issue is too big for them to conceive. However, if we are to conceive of a “problem posing” educational approach, then intersectionality is a crucial component. Students need not be introduced to every intersectional angle in every text but can consider a component of the narrative where an intersectional lens gives them deeper critical insight into the text.

FRAMING DISCUSSION TO ENCOURAGE AN INTERSECTIONAL LENS

As educators, we frame issues, texts, and problems for students in order to lead classroom discussion. While students often get the “what” of the Great Books curriculum, i.e., what books are about, they need a guide to lead them to the “why.” As we introduce students to systems of meanings, we must also “shape the way knowledge is selected, sequenced, paced, and evaluated” (Toolkits 54). Intersectionality encourages us to widen the frame to provide students tools they need to critique a text through different lenses of analysis. Below is a list of advice for framing questions and ideas based on my classroom experience:

1. Students should not expect a marginalized author to write a marginalized hero. For example, students are always disappointed to read *Frankenstein* and find that Mary Shelley, daughter of feminist Mary Wollstonecraft, has written seemingly weak female characters. Students should recognize that authors are products of their society and might have to find subtler ways to write about characters of their identity group.
2. Tell students from the outset of the semester that they should look for missing voices. Who is not represented in the text and why might that be? This question will give them a way to examine the historical power structures from the text’s time period.
3. Ask students to think about their own preconceptions about race, class, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity. Where do those ideas come from? Are they necessarily applicable to the text or is there a different historical perspective to consider regarding the identity markers?

4. Ask students to consider their experiences with a text prior to class. Have they heard of the text before? What have they heard, seen, or read about the text? This question is not about a previous reading of the text but about the text, encouraging students to challenge what they think they already know. An example might be their understanding of Eve from stories in Genesis.
5. Encourage students to challenge the representation. For example, when an author represents women in a certain way, does this mean that is how women were? Was society made up of whores, beacons of light, Madonna figures, and hags, or are these representations describing a larger conception of women in society? Do these representations still bear relevance to the world students live in?
6. When adding a text to the Great Books curriculum that is from an underrepresented group, make sure students see it as part of the canon. For example, *Inanna* can be read as a creation story. When students see how such a text fits into the canon, they move beyond such labels as “woman’s text” and can integrate ideas of institutions and power into discussion in a more nuanced fashion.
7. Students might also ask questions about the authors. Who were they? Why did they write what they did? What do their perspectives, likely privileged in some manner, say about those in society who may be oppressed? Might the author have experienced both privilege and oppression? How does that complicate the narrative?
8. Ask students to avoid “grouping,” that is putting agents within a text in a group just because they may all be of the same gender or class. Instead, students should look for differences in order to find tensions and intersections within the text. Below I use Shakespeare as an example.

THE INTERSECTIONAL SHAKESPEARE

The third semester in the Honors Civilizations sequence opens with two essays by Michel de Montaigne (“Of Monstrous Child” and “On Cannibalism”) paired with a classic Shakespearean text, *Othello*. Charged with reading these texts in August to be prepared for first-day discussion, students often come into the classroom ready to discuss Montaigne’s critique of the

European notion of barbarism. Students almost always begin discussion of Montaigne with a passage from “On Cannibals”: “I find that there is nothing barbarous and savage in this nation, by anything that I can gather, excepting, that every one gives the title of barbarism to everything that is not in use in his own country.” This passage ties in nicely to classroom discussion of the Moor, Othello, whom Brabantio describes as a savage who must have “enchanted” his daughter, Desdemona, with “magic” to make her run to his “sooty bosom” (*Othello* I:2, 70). Classroom discussion inevitably turns to racism, discrimination, and applications to the students’ present understanding of their world, all within our first fifty-minute class period together.

This type of discussion about race in *Othello*, while valuable in itself, is not necessarily an intersectional lens. In this reading of *Othello*, students have identified the problem (Iago is cruelly destroying the lives of Othello and Desdemona because of his racial prejudice) without complicating the struggle; before the end of the first fifty minutes, I make sure that we complicate it. We start with naming the identity markers of each character in a list that looks like this:

Othello: Moor (read as black), wealthy, married to Desdemona, military hero

Desdemona: woman, wealthy, married to Othello

Cassio: wealthy background, military experience, involved with prostitute Bianca

Iago: lower class than Cassio or Othello, married to Emilia

Emilia: Desdemona’s maid, married to Iago

Bianca: prostitute, assumed to be woman of color

From this list alone, an intersectional approach becomes clear. Race, class, gender, education, employment, and marital status become integral points of motivation and behavior for each character involved, leading to a series of questions posed by myself and/or the students about the play:

Is Iago’s cruelty motivated by losing the position to Cassio given to him by Othello?

Why does Emilia stand up for Iago when he appears to treat her like dirt?

Why does Desdemona stay with Othello when he obviously cannot trust her?

Why would Othello trust Iago over Desdemona?

Why would Cassio sleep with a prostitute?

Why is it assumed that Bianca is a woman of color?

What do we make of the verbal and physical abuse?

In the construction of these questions, we have begun more to pose problems than to find answers. A sample classroom dialogue among students might go like this:

“Does Othello not trust Desdemona because men hold more power than women?”

“But wouldn’t Othello understand being mistreated and therefore be more sensitive to his wife?”

“Maybe, but it’s possible he cares more about his status and wealth than his marriage.”

“If that’s so, why would he get so jealous?”

Clearly, time does not permit us to answer all these questions—it barely affords us space to ask them—but we have begun to complicate issues within *Othello* that go far beyond the words of a few cruelly racist men and demonstrate the distinctions of power, privilege, marginalization, and oppression that not only exist in the same social paradigm but can reside within the same person.

The second class session includes acting out a scene from the play to examine the role of women through an intersectional lens. I ask two people to play the roles of Desdemona and Emilia and to read—or if they are so inclined, act out—Act 4, Scene 3, in which Desdemona considers if it is possible that there are wives who cheat on their husbands and says that if there are, she “wouldn’t not” do “such a deed for all the world.” Emilia replies, “The world’s a huge thing. It is a small price for a great vice” (4:3, 52–55). Within a few lines, Emilia delivers her monologue in which she ultimately states that if women strike their husbands or cheat on them, the men only have themselves to blame for teaching their wives such behavior in the first place. We spend time dissecting this scene afterward, analyzing Emilia’s meaning and

how her position as a lower-class woman affects her belief system. Next, we discuss why we have read this scene, as opposed to another from the play, out loud. Students often admit that they skimmed through this one because it did not seem as important as what was happening between Iago and Othello, but it helps them to understand the motivations of both women, based on their status as women and also their social classes, as the play progresses. Some say that it makes sense to them that Emilia, the one without class privilege, would “cuckold her husband to make him a monarch” (4:3, 60–61) as it would mean the possibility of greater security or comfort in a world that had possibly already been cruel to her. The students who have read the scene aloud, especially those who have read Emilia, find themselves moved by the words that so blatantly challenge the rights of wealthy men to dominate women in Shakespeare’s Venice.

By the end of our week on *Othello*, race, class, and gender become inextricably linked. The outset of the play, when Brabantio accuses his daughter of betraying him to marry a man of color, suggests that deeply intertwined racist and patriarchal structures of power and dominance are in motion. In the classroom, we do not set out to unravel those structures but to acknowledge their existence. With these exercises, I have two goals for students:

1. That they recognize that issues of race, class, and gender are not limited to singular instances relating to one or two individuals in the play but are linked in a much larger structure of power and ideology.
2. That they can use an intersectional lens in all the texts they come across in the semester to come.

CONCLUSION: BEYOND THE SINGLE-ISSUE STRUGGLE

One of the first steps in a “problem posing” approach to education is to work beyond the assumption that there exists one problem singularly remote from all other problems. The notion of “woman as oppressed” will appear in several of the texts students encounter, but this should not be an indicator that oppression comes in the same form or experience. In *Sister Outsider*, black feminist scholar and activist Audre Lorde writes, “There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle as we do not live single-issue lives” (138). Lorde illustrates that the struggles of black people, while particular to the individual, are not isolated experiences but are shared by many. Though Lorde’s essay

predates Crenshaw's first use of intersectionality by several years, she powerfully shows the problem of singularly identifying a text. One of my students, Keely, noted that thinking about intersectionality in this way allowed her to move beyond herself and the "it's not my problem" mentality that is so easy to adopt in just trying to get her assigned reading and homework done. Keely's classmate, Erin, noted that intersectionality is useful for students at the predominantly white University of Maine to bridge the gap between themselves and social movements such as Black Lives Matter.

As evidenced by the 2017 National Collegiate Honors Council conference, honors programs are continuing to strive toward addressing questions of justice and equity in their classrooms and programs. A Great Books curriculum that offers up a rather homogenous array of authors and producers of texts can seem counter to these objectives, yet the goal of including marginalized voices does not necessarily mean the eradication of the Great Books tradition, which can teach students how to find and analyze these voices when they do appear. For example, Penelope in *The Odyssey*, Beatrice in *The Divine Comedy*, and Desdemona in *Othello* all provide opportunities to analyze the role of women in the literature of a Great Books curriculum. Teaching students to read these characters not as representatives of an entire sex but as existing with their own set of identity markers can go a long way toward forming an intersectional lens.

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Student Preferences for Faculty-Led Honors Study Abroad Experiences

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A critical component of any education, particularly an honors education, is an interdisciplinary curriculum that enriches the college experience. At South Dakota State University (SDSU), the Fishback Honors College strives to provide a robust and holistic educational experience through innovative honors courses paired with enriching co-curricular programs. One way to meet these goals is an honors study abroad experience included as part of the Fishback Honors College curriculum. The study abroad course is an integral part the honors curriculum, fulfilling the requirement of an interdisciplinary colloquium course and thus making it accessible to students from every field of study.

Study abroad courses have many proven benefits for students, including an increase in attributes such as student's self-efficacy (Petersdotter, Niehoff, & Freund; Cubillos & Ilvento), an expansion of cultural knowledge, and a greater openness to new experiences (Martin, Katz-Buonincontro, & Livert). Professional and career development is also a desired outcome for many study

abroad participants (Chapman). Additionally, according to Forsey, Broomhall, & Davis, many students prioritize fun on their study abroad experience. Assessing the desires of students is important in determining how we can best achieve these student-centered outcomes through study abroad offerings.

Several articles and forums have discussed themes and outcomes that are both desirable and valuable in an honors study abroad experience. For example, Braid and Palma de Schrynemakers find fault with the way study abroad courses are often sewn together in an unsystematic process, admonishing facilitators of these courses not to succumb to the downfalls of traditional study abroad programs. Haynes calls for honors programs to offer diverse study abroad programs with accessible, meaningful, reflective, and well-integrated learning outcomes. Even with this research, a need persists to fill existing knowledge gaps about honors study abroad through tangible research and exploration. Our study engaged honors students at South Dakota State University in determining their desired outcomes, perceived barriers, and overall expectations for an honors study abroad program.

LITERATURE REVIEW

International experiences have become increasingly popular for college students in the United States. According to the Institute of International Education, the number of U.S. students studying abroad has more than tripled over the last twenty years, increasing to 325,339 students in the 2015–16 academic year. Motivating factors for studying abroad include the individual benefits gained from experiencing a new culture or place. According to Anderson and Lawton, students seek a sense of world enlightenment and personal growth more than career development and entertainment when they study abroad. Heightened empathy and openness are also likely outcomes from study abroad (Martin, Katz, & Livert; Narvaez & Hill). Likewise, Jackson concluded that experiencing new cultures increases a person's social pragmatism and decreases ethnocentrism. Another study found a positive correlation between exposure to differing cultures and an increase in creativity and receptiveness (Leung & Chiu). An understanding of both the perceived and tangible benefits of studying abroad is key to meeting the needs and desires of students.

Understanding the demographics of students who are choosing (or not choosing) to study abroad is also vital in developing a meaningful and productive study abroad program. According to the Institute of International Education, 66% of students who studied abroad from the United States

during the 2015–16 academic year identified as women, and 72% identified as white. Consistently, nearly 60% of students who study abroad do so during their junior or senior year of college (Institute of International Education). While noting these current demographics, we must also look at trends going forward. Between 2006 and 2016, there was a 65% growth in the percentage of minority students abroad, and the number of students majoring in STEM fields increased to 25% (Institute of International Education). Study abroad offerings should meet the needs of the changing student demographic choosing to participate in these experiences.

Students have several motivations when choosing a study abroad location. According to Anderson and Lawton, students who seek entertainment as their primary motivation often choose countries that present them with fewer challenges, such as destinations where people speak the same language. Meanwhile, students who seek world enlightenment often choose a country that presents greater challenges in the form of different languages, customs, or cultures (Anderson & Lawton). According to the Institute of International Education, 54% of American students chose to study in a European country during the 2015–16 academic year, and the top five study abroad destinations for American students were all western European countries. The next most popular regions for study abroad were Latin America and the Caribbean (16%) followed by Asia (11%) (Institute of International Education). Understanding where students want to study abroad can help institutions organize experiences of interest to students that also push them outside of their comfort zones.

Short-term study abroad options, especially those offered during the summer, are popular among college students. According to the Institute of International Education, 35.4% of students who studied abroad during the 2015–16 academic year chose a summer study abroad program that was no longer than eight weeks. Carley and Tudor found that students' views and perceptions about a country changed after just two weeks abroad, concluding that these short-term exposures are a valuable option for students. Sachau, Brasher, & Fee suggested the term "study tour" to refer to faculty-led study abroad programs that are one to four weeks in length and involve travel between cities and sites in one or more countries. Although some criticize these shorter, tour-focused experiences as less valuable, they can still equip students for future independent travel and engagement in a global world.

Study tours often focus less on content knowledge and more on shaping students' attitudes about a country or culture and helping students develop confidence traveling internationally (Sachau, Brasher, & Fee). Many study

abroad courses focus on a subject or theme that is relevant to the destination country or to the faculty leaders' areas of expertise. In honors, we have the unique opportunity to approach study abroad from an interdisciplinary perspective. Students who are participating in a study tour are often required to register for academic credit to accompany the experience, adding incentive for students to participate fully in the experience and enabling them to apply for financial aid to help offset costs (Sachau, Brasher, & Fee). Some study tours include pre-departure meetings or classes that allow students to meet and interact with one another and with the faculty leaders and that are an important tool for reducing student and faculty anxiety prior to traveling with the group (Koernig). Otero also stresses the value of the faculty-led model for honors study abroad experiences because faculty are able to connect the study abroad course and curriculum directly to the values and objectives of the honors program.

Pre-departure classes offer an opportunity to discuss academic content and background information with the traveling group. Such classes allow students an opportunity to learn about the destination country and culture, which Braid and Palma de Schrynmakers stress as an important part of creating a meaningful experience abroad. Focusing on the academic content in this setting also allows more time for cultural activities while abroad (Koernig), which is especially important in a short study tour. The format of the pre-departure course and assignments can vary to meet the needs of the instructors and students. According to Duke, exposing students to experiential and collaborative learning that requires them to work in groups and to take some control of the learning process helps them learn more efficiently and rapidly. Another approach is assigning journal prompts that ask students to reflect on what they are learning and experiencing both before and during their time abroad (Duke; Sachau, Brasher, & Fee). Donahue stresses that the honors study abroad experience should incorporate self-reflection on culture before, during, and after immersion in the destination country. The assignments given before and during a study abroad experience should incorporate this reflection in the way that best meets the needs of the class and the students.

THE FISHBACK HONORS COLLEGE MODEL FOR STUDY ABROAD

At SDSU, honors-led study abroad experiences comprise intentional discussion, reflection, and a guided exploration of themes of diversity and

awareness. The experience abroad may include studying philosophy and the ethos of honors in Greece or studying human morals and global ecosystems in the Galapagos Islands. Study abroad provides a platform for students to learn significant information in an engaging way, and an honors-led experience has the potential to facilitate and accelerate this learning.

The Fishback Honors College has a brief, but rich history in offering honors study abroad experiences (Table 1). Each year, nearly 25 student and faculty participate in the honors study abroad course. The destination changes from one year to the next and rotates between popular European options such as Greece or Ireland and less-frequented areas such as the Galapagos Islands and Indonesia. These destinations are based on interest from students and faculty, and we attempt to visit countries where SDSU does not already have an established study abroad program in another discipline. Each year, we work with an outside company to coordinate our in-country experiences, which adds to the cost of the experience but saves time for the faculty leaders and honors staff and helps us to continue offering new experiences in different locations. The approach of offering new destinations and interdisciplinary themes annually allows for collaboration with dynamic faculty from all backgrounds as well as recruitment of honors students from every discipline.

A critical component of the honors study abroad program at SDSU is the seamless integration of this course into our students' schedules and graduation requirements. Student participants enroll and participate in a three-credit honors course during the spring semester where they explore the themes, history, traditions, and culture of the destination country. These credits may fulfill a required upper-division interdisciplinary honors colloquium. Immediately following the completion of the spring semester, students and faculty depart for a ten- to fourteen-day immersion in their destination country.

TABLE 1. HISTORICAL STUDY ABROAD DATA

Location	Number of Students/Faculty	Duration	Cost ¹
Greece	20/3	May 11–22, 2015	\$5110/\$5320
Galapagos Islands	18/3	May 9–20, 2016	\$5926/\$6016
Ireland	20/2	May 7–18, 2017	\$4548/\$5058
Indonesia	24/3	May 7–21, 2018	\$4502/\$4702

¹Cost includes the 3 credits for the class. The first number is the amount billed by SDSU (after \$500 scholarship), and the second number is total cost including estimation for meals (after \$500 scholarship).

The goal of this present study was to determine the effectiveness of our honors study abroad model. Two overarching objectives guided our survey. First, we wanted to determine what students want from an honors study abroad experience, i.e., location, length, timing, and outcomes. Second, we wished to discover if our current model meets the needs of our students.

METHODS AND RESULTS

To understand student expectations and preferences for honors study abroad experiences, we developed a twelve-question survey with QuestionPro and distributed the survey to sophomores enrolled in the Fishback Honors College. The survey contained a variety of question types, such as Likert-type responses, rankings, and multiple-choice questions. The survey was available to students in the spring of 2017.

Seventy-seven students completed the survey, yielding a 69% response rate. Seventy-seven percent of students indicated that they had some interest (n=37) or were very interested (n=22) in participating in an honors study abroad experience during their undergraduate career (Table 2), and 46% of students said they would likely do so. Cost was the single most important factor when determining whether a student would participate in a specific study abroad experience (Table 3). In fact, 85% of students reported that total costs of \$4,000 or \$5,000 would be prohibitive to their participation. Cost was followed closely by destination and the timing or duration of the study abroad experience in terms of importance. An overwhelming 61% of students found it most desirable to study abroad immediately following the end of the spring semester. The next highest preferred timeframes included the middle of the summer (13%) and winter break (12%). The faculty leaders ranked lowest as a determining factor for choosing a particular study abroad experience.

TABLE 2. INTEREST IN PARTICIPATING IN AN HONORS STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE (N = 77)

Interest Level	Percentage
Very Interested	29
Some Interest	48
Neutral	12
Little Interest	6
Not at all Interested	5

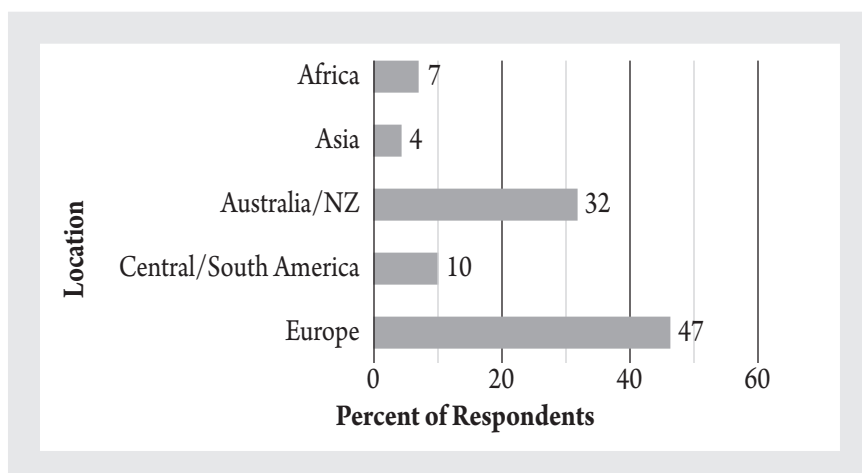
Students had strong opinions on the location, duration, and academic theme of honors study abroad experiences. Europe (n=36) and Australia/New Zealand (n=25) were by far the most popular destinations, yielding 79% of the votes, leaving Central America, Africa, and Asia to a combined 20% of students' greatest interest (Figure 1). Students expressed the greatest interest (69%, n=53) and likelihood of participating (92%, n=71) in study abroad experiences that would take place over a duration of one to three weeks as compared to longer-term experiences (Table 4). The interest (3%, n=2) and likelihood (1%, n=1) of studying abroad for a semester were much lower.

TABLE 3. RANKING IMPORTANCE OF FACTORS DETERMINING DESIRE TO STUDY ABROAD (N = 77)

Factor	Ranking Percentages					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ability to Fit in Schedule	6	17	12	19	26	20
Academic Focus	5	20	17	25	27	6
Cost	68	14	5	3	5	5
Destination	5	27	31	17	15	5
Faculty Leaders	9	3	6	10	16	56
Timing/Duration	6	19	29	26	12	8

Note: Students were asked to rank the above factors in order of importance when determining their ability/desire to participate in a study abroad program.

FIGURE 1. STUDENTS' PREFERRED CHOICE OF STUDY ABROAD LOCATION (N = 77)

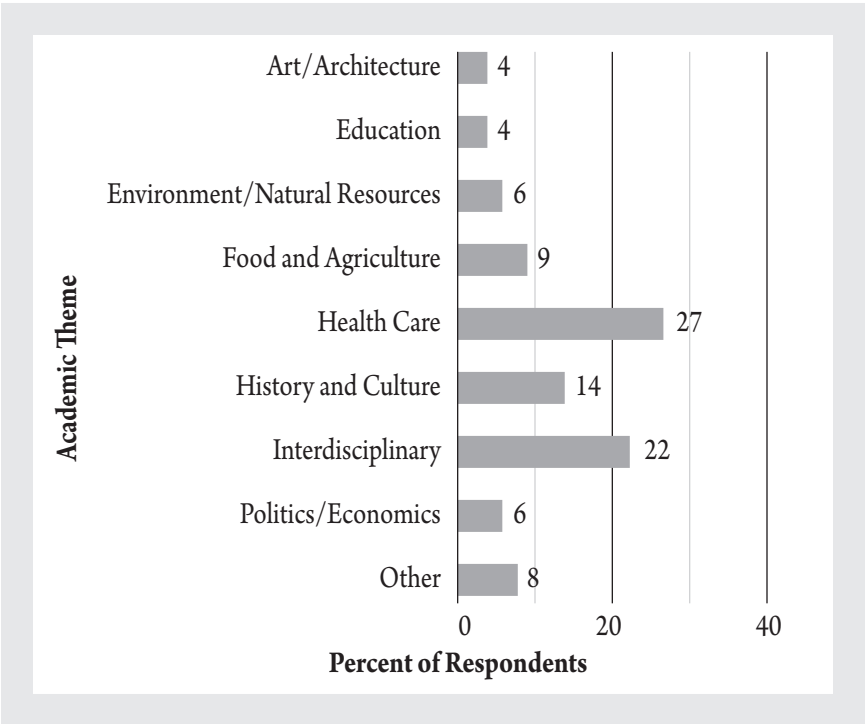


Regardless of destination or timeframe, students preferred academic themes related to health care (n=21) and history and culture (n=11) or interdisciplinary themes (n=17) (Figure 2). The strong preference for themes related to health care makes sense as the top three majors by student enrollment within the Fishback Honors College are biology, pharmacy, and nursing.

TABLE 4. INTEREST AND LIKELIHOOD OF PARTICIPATING IN STUDY ABROAD BASED ON DURATION (N = 77)

Duration	Greatest Interest	Greatest Likelihood of Participating
1–3 Weeks	69%	92%
1–2 Weeks	22%	7%
3 Months	5%	0%
1 Semester	3%	1%
1 Academic Year	1%	0%

FIGURE 2. STUDENT’S INTEREST IN POTENTIAL ACADEMIC THEMES (N = 78)



Students also indicated their preferred scope of the study abroad program as multidisciplinary learning (45%) and service learning (35%) more than single disciplinary focus (19%).

Students were asked to reflect on the outcomes that they would hope to receive from participating in an honors study abroad experience. Based on their responses, we developed four overarching reasons for studying abroad: cultural development, professional development, personal development, and social engagement (Table 5). We did not establish these categories prior to the administration of the survey, so we do not have an equal number of survey items in each category; however, they offer more comprehensive and overarching terminology for discussing the reasons students choose to study abroad. Cultural development accounted for more than 40% of the overall

TABLE 5. STUDENTS' DESIRED THEMES AND OUTCOMES OF STUDY ABROAD (N = 229)

Theme	Percent of Respondents
Cultural Development	41
Experience a new culture	23
To learn what life is like elsewhere	9
Expand my understanding of humanity/ human condition	6
Building relationships globally	2
Better understanding of own country	1
Personal Development	23
Personal development	16
Self-reflection	3
Improve a new language	3
Gain independence	1
Professional Development	22
Career experience	11
Résumé building	7
Support career path	4
Social Engagement	14
Fun/Cool/Exciting	14

Note: Students were asked to select 3 of the above objectives that they would like to receive out of a study abroad experience.

responses and included outcomes such as experiencing a new culture, expanding understanding of humanity, and building global relationships. Personal development and related outcomes accounted for 23% of the responses while outcomes related to professional development included 22% of responses. Social engagement, which included only one item, accounted for 14% of students' desired outcomes from studying abroad.

DISCUSSION

The survey allowed us to understand our students' study abroad needs and will help us serve them better as we plan future honors study abroad experiences. We hope that the results also prove useful for other honors colleges and programs that are planning study abroad experiences. The Institute of International Education found that around 60% of students who study abroad do so during their junior or senior year of college. Thus, we surveyed sophomore honors students regarding their preferences for faculty-led honors study abroad programs, allowing us to gather feedback from students who were more likely to be aware of the honors study abroad program and who still had time to participate in a study abroad program in the future.

One of the key takeaways from our survey was determining the ideal length and time for an honors study abroad experience. The students who responded to our survey indicated that they are overwhelmingly more likely to study abroad with honors when the international experience is one to three weeks in length and takes place immediately following the conclusion of the spring semester. This result aligns with the timing and duration of past honors study abroad offerings at SDSU, so we plan to continue the practice of traveling abroad for one to three weeks at the beginning of the summer. Some of the research suggests that longer study abroad experiences have more benefits for students, but not every student is willing or able to spend that much time abroad—even during the summer. Many students need to work or find internships during the summer, and studying abroad during the May interim allows plenty of time for this. We also hope that if students undertake a shorter study abroad experience, they will be more likely to take advantage of longer study abroad opportunities in the future.

One interesting inconsistency between our survey results and past participation in our study abroad experiences was the response to the question about cost. Eighty-five percent of students indicated that costs of \$4000 or \$5000 would be prohibitive to their participation in an honors study abroad experience, but all of our honors study abroad offerings to date have cost at

least \$4500 (Table 1). One reason for this inconsistency could be the cost of the three-credit class that accompanies our study abroad experience. The total cost for the study abroad programs presented in Table 1 includes the tuition cost, which is around \$1000. We did not specify in our survey question whether tuition costs were included, so students may have been thinking strictly about travel costs. Taking out the cost of the credits, two of the honors study abroad offerings would be below \$4000 and two would still be above \$4000 after factoring in the automatic \$500 study abroad scholarship that all honors students receive. Another possibility is that the cost of the honors study abroad offerings to date may be truly prohibitive for students since the survey respondents indicated that cost was the most important factor in determining whether they would participate in an honors study abroad experience. We will need to take this matter into account when planning future study abroad experiences. We partner with an outside organization that plans the itinerary and takes care of all our in-country arrangements and expenses, which has made it easier to plan new experiences in new countries with new faculty leaders each year but which adds to the cost of the experience for students. A challenge for us—and for anyone organizing a study abroad experience—is balancing cost with convenience.

Not surprisingly, our students indicated they were most interested in studying abroad in Europe, aligning with the findings of the Institute of International Education about where students are most likely to study abroad. However, while only 4% of our students who responded to the survey indicated Asia as their area of greatest interest, we reached our maximum capacity for an honors study abroad course for the first time this year with our upcoming experience in Indonesia. One explanation for this inconsistency is that more students are aware of the opportunity to study abroad now that we are in our fourth year of offering it, so we have a larger pool of students who are considering and taking advantage of studying abroad with honors, no matter the destination. Another consideration is that we have only one honors study abroad option each year. Students could be choosing their study abroad experience based more on timing and less on location because they know they want to go abroad with honors. Finally, we have several students who have participated in more than one honors study abroad experience. For example, four of the students participating in the upcoming Indonesia course have previously studied abroad with honors.

Faculty leaders ranked as the least important factor for students deciding whether to study abroad with honors. Because honors students already have

a community within the honors student body, they may feel comfortable with the other students and care less about the faculty leaders. Students also know that a representative of the Fishback Honors College administrative team—either the dean or the academic advisor—always serves as a co-leader for the honors study abroad experiences, and since the students typically know this person already, they feel less uncertainty about other faculty leaders.

The students who responded to our survey indicated that experiencing a new culture was the number one reason they would participate in a study abroad experience. The second most common reason for studying abroad was personal development, followed by fun/excitement and career experience. These results align with research from Anderson and Lawton, which found that students desired world enlightenment and personal growth over career development and entertainment when they participate in study abroad experiences. This finding also strengthens the case for offering interdisciplinary honors study abroad experiences since most students are not looking to study abroad for specific major- or career-related reasons.

Students felt strongly about the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary nature of the honors study abroad experience, which aligns with our current model. Honors promotes interdisciplinary inquiry, and a study abroad experience supports this goal. Offering a three-credit course prior to the international experience allows us to spend time talking about different facets of the destination country and culture, and we maintain flexibility in our curriculum to adapt discussions to the majors and interests of the students. Honors also promote services, and our students indicated a strong interest in service-oriented study abroad experiences, an unsurprising result since many of our students participate in mission trips and university-sponsored service learning experiences. We hope to fulfill this interest by offering service-focused honors study abroad opportunities in the future.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

While the target audience and data collected for our study were limited to a very specific student population, the results align with other research and national data on student preferences for study abroad opportunities. We encourage other honors programs and colleges to consider conducting their own surveys to determine the unique desires and needs of their students when it comes to study abroad. One future study might ascertain if student respondents have previously studied abroad. Knowing which students had

studied abroad prior to taking the survey could prove relevant to the conclusions gathered from the responses. Additionally, a factor that may have influenced our study is that the surveyed audience most likely comprised students who were more apt to respond to a voluntary survey or those who were interested in studying abroad.

This study left us with several ideas for future research. We are interested in knowing whether students who participate in a short-term, faculty-led study abroad experience—particularly an honors study abroad experience—are more likely to study abroad again in the future. We think it would also be beneficial to devote more time to researching the benefits honors students gain from studying abroad in comparison to non-honors students; this study offers insight only into the needs and desires of honors students, and we discovered that they considered cost, destination, and increased cultural competency as the most important factors when deciding whether to study abroad.

Understanding the data gathered, coupled with previous studies, we can ascertain that the current study abroad program at the Fishback Honors College provides a good model for honors study abroad experiences. Previous research has shown that the ten-to-fourteen-day length for the program has positive outcomes for students, aligning with our students' desired length of time for a study abroad experience. This study also shows a positive correlation between our program's interdisciplinary focus and students' desires for an interdisciplinary study abroad experience in honors.

This study was a first step in improving our study abroad program for students in the Fishback Honors College. The data will inform future practices and efforts to create the best honors study abroad experience possible. We recommend that other honors programs and colleges take time to assess the effectiveness of their own study abroad offerings through comparisons to previous research and surveys of student needs and desires. We believe creating a study abroad program that is appealing for students and meets their needs will encourage more participation in the important and powerful experience of studying abroad.

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A Structured Course for Personal and Professional Development

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The Citadel

THE CHALLENGE

Students arrive on a college campus full of excitement for their futures; most of them wholeheartedly and enthusiastically embrace the culture of learning, the newfound independence, and the pursuit of nonacademic interests that typify the college experience. Unfortunately, a student's subsequent daily life can be dominated by such questions as how to do well in classes, how to keep scholarships, how to balance a part-time job, and how to find time for extracurricular activities. Many of the skills necessary to thrive at college—such as managing time, dealing with roommates and stress, developing rapport with faculty, mastering the educational material, and planning for a career—can be overwhelming to young college students. A survey of first-year college students in 2012 reported that 47% struggled with effective time management, 47% had difficulty getting along with their roommate, 41% were dissatisfied with the relevance of coursework, 42% frequently felt

overwhelmed by all they had to do, 35% switched majors, 33% had difficulty adjusting to the demands of the coursework, 33% had a hard time developing effective study skills, and 25% left college before their sophomore year (Higher Education Research Institute). Meanwhile, as educators we strive to encourage intellectual curiosity, to inspire a love of learning, to foster the application of knowledge, to embrace self-reflection, and to develop the whole person. We aim to assist them in developing the character of a critical thinker, in maturing as an individual, and in progressing toward becoming a success within their chosen field, i.e., we aim to assist them in their personal and professional development. To accomplish this aim, we need to meet students where they are.

Since 2009 almost 90% of the surveyed college freshmen have identified “getting a better job” as a major reason for attending college (Pryor et al). College educators can help students work towards this goal by producing mature, critical-thinking graduates who are well-prepared not only for life but also for a career. Many students, unfortunately, do not participate in the frequent, developmental interaction that provides encouragement and guidance in examining and developing their future career goals. They can best choose a career by identifying a confluence of aptitudes, experiences, and passions. Students’ post-graduate plans and a pathway for making these plans a reality merit deep inquiry. While most students periodically interact with an academic advisor within their major, these meetings frequently focus on scheduling and class selection issues. While these discussions are important to ensure degree completion and on-time graduation, they do not provide the guided introspection that aids in the development of a career plan. Academic advisors are sometimes not trained or equipped to provide significant career exploration. Career advising, on the other hand, is not necessarily as structured or proactive as many students need. All too often, gathering information on careers and career choice is a student-driven activity that occurs only late in a student’s college experience, left to offhand and belated trips to career services. A benefit to both the student and the college would be to intertwine career exploration and academic advising within a defined curriculum no later than the first semester of the student’s sophomore year at college.

BEST PRACTICES

Our challenge is not only to encourage the overall growth and learning of each student but also to make the learning strategic so that the student

is positioned for acceptance in, and success at, post-graduate school and employment. Strategic learning requires keeping students' focus on both the impending hurdles of college academic requirements and the need for longer-term career goals, and it requires that students recognize and appreciate their skills and interests. A variety of international organizations have assembled methods for assisting students in achieving success in college and beyond, and their recommendations can advance our aim to help students create a personal and professional development plan, applying skills and knowledge for both individual growth and career advancement.

Career Readiness

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) has defined career readiness as “the attainment and demonstration of requisite competencies that broadly prepare college graduates for a successful transition into the workplace” (“Career Readiness Defined”). Additionally, NACE has identified key career readiness competencies of critical thinking, communication, teamwork, information technology application, leadership, professionalism, career management, and intercultural fluency (“Career Readiness Defined”). Most students gain the key readiness competencies through academically challenging coursework and the life skills obtained during college. Although students may then possess the skills needed for a successful transition to a career, without additional guidance they may not be certain what that career should be and how to get there. From the moment students first arrive on campus, the goal is to motivate them to determine, investigate, and plan for their future career. Students need the guidance of a mentor who acts as part academic advisor, part career counselor, part professor, part devil’s advocate, and part cheerleader. The resources provided by NACE, including individual skill assessments, sample course descriptions, and articles on career readiness planning, support a mentor’s efforts (“Career Readiness Resources”).

Academic Advising

The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) has compiled core values and recommendations for best practices. NACADA recognizes that academic advising is “an integral part of the educational process” that cultivates a student’s potential. Students develop an accurate self-perception and “sound academic and career goals” through regular communication with an academic advisor. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

Organization (UNESCO) recommends that academic advising activities include assisting with “decision-making and career direction,” interpreting “interest/ability inventories,” and selecting other “educational experiences” such as internships and study abroad; these advising activities should be performed in addition to the standard advising role of aiding in the selection of courses and evaluating progress towards goals (“The Role of Student Affairs”).

The NACADA and UNESCO standards suggest that successful academic advising uses contact with an advisor to develop students’ potential and career direction by effectively gauging their interests and abilities. Numerous academic advising advocates have added to these standards in their studies of the key attributes of effective advising. Their work suggests that successful advising is integrative, helping “students make meaning out of their education as a whole,” and that students “should expect their advising relationship to be an intellectually challenging one that will require substantial effort on their parts but will offer extraordinary rewards as well” (Lowenstein, “Toward a Theory”). Given both the effort and time needed for a student to be fully involved and also the importance of the learning that occurs, advising should take place in a structured, credit-bearing class: “this reflective learning is so important in institutions of higher learning that the student should earn credit toward graduation” (Lowenstein, “Academic Advising”).

Despite various theories and approaches to academic advising, developmental advising has become the most common advising approach used in honors programs (Klein et al). Developmental academic advising is a “systematic process based on a close student-advisor relationship intended to aid students in achieving education, career, and personal goals through the utilization of the full range of institutional and community resources” (Winston, Grites, et al.). Developmental advising leads students to “realize their maximum educational potential through communication and information exchanges with an advisor” (Winston, Ender, et al.). By continually interacting with an advisor, students develop a plan on how to achieve personal and professional goals: “The relationship goes beyond typical advising issues such as registration and class scheduling, tapping into academic competence, personal involvement, and developing life goals” (Klein et al).

Drake and King of NACADA recommend approaching advising as a teaching and learning process, with the student exploring the questions “Who am I?” and “What do I want to do with my life?” Students can explore the former through personality inventories and self-reflection and the latter through short- and long-term goal setting, career exploration, and a clarification of

the fit between strengths and goals. Students can then examine the question “What do I need to do to achieve my goals?” by using campus resources and interacting with faculty.

The inclusion of these developmental advising attributes with other academic advising recommendations creates a succinct summary of best practices: students should be involved in an intellectually challenging, credit-bearing class in which an advisor guides them to investigate their interests and abilities and take responsibility for their education with the goal of developing their potential and career direction.

Career Counseling Services

NACE professional standards for career services emphasize helping students understand their competencies and interests so they may explore the fit between their competencies and job requirements. With this understanding, a student can choose relevant experience opportunities, i.e., “student activities, community service, student employment, research projects, cooperative education, [and] internships” to increase future educational and job prospects (“The Professional Standards”). NACE provides career readiness resources that can be used to help students assess their skills, understand the value of internships and job mapping, and market the value of their study abroad time; it also advises that career services provide occupation information, job-search training, and connections to alumni and prospective employers (“Career Readiness Resources”). UNESCO also recommends that career counseling assist students in becoming “active managers of their career paths (including managing career transitions and balancing various life roles) as well as becoming lifelong learners in the sense of professional development over the lifespan” (*Handbook*). In summary, the standards for effective career counseling lead a student to explore and prepare for future career possibilities by understanding personal competencies, pursuing the correct academic program, and participating in experiential opportunities.

COMBINING ACADEMIC ADVISING AND CAREER COUNSELING

Comparing the summary definitions and goals of academic advising and career counseling reveals the similarities in their purpose and approach, and a strong link between the two helps students synthesize their academic and nonacademic interests in the context of their longer-term passions, talents, and values. Career and academic advising interact to “help students

understand how their personal interests, abilities, and values might predict success in the academic and career fields they are considering and how to form their academic and career goals accordingly” (Gordon).

GENERATIONAL INFLUENCES

Generational theory suggests certain overriding traits of different generations and preferred methods for interacting with them. The college students we are working with now are generally the tail-end of the Millennial generation. Tamara Montag et al. studied Millennials and summarized effective methods for advising them. She reported that this generation feels a “specialness trait,” and consequently the most effective method for advising them is to provide “constant feedback, individualized classes, and a personal relationship with an advisor/mentor” (29). Montag et al. recommends that Millennials be assigned both a staff advisor and a faculty mentor; the staff advisor provides “straightforward advice about majors, course offerings, and requirements” while the mentor engages “in developmental advising practices, giving individualized attention to students, guiding them through career options, and connecting them to resources relevant for their major” (32).

SYNTHESIZING BEST PRACTICES

An excellent way to keep post-graduate planning in the forefront of students’ minds is to make it a requirement. All college students are well-served by a mandatory, credit-bearing, four-year course of study that synthesizes key aspects of academic and career counseling into one setting. Such a course provides a one-on-one opportunity for each student to investigate personal aptitudes and interests and to engage in the interactive development of individual personal and professional goals. Each freshman enrolls in a first-year experience class, ideally led by the student’s mentor, to acquire the academic and life skills needed for a successful transition from high school to college. The curriculum for this freshman class includes not only proven techniques for studying, managing time, and communicating with professors but also tasks each student with developing a plan for using each semester and each summer for career-valuable endeavors, employing self-assessment tools, and exploring experiential learning opportunities. After this freshman experience course, each student enrolls in a three-course series on “Personal and Professional Development.” This course, again led by the mentor, provides the opportunity for research, writing, and discussion on the topic of the

student's future. The faculty mentor, as suggested by Montag et al., coordinates personal developmental advising and career planning services. Through this four-year approach, students develop a personal relationship that guides them in discussing and assessing their interests and abilities, that encourages them to engage in additional experiential opportunities (such as study away programs, research, and internships), and that coordinates their academic and career goals.

DETAILS ON A PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSE SERIES

The goal of a Personal and Professional Development class is multi-faceted:

1. To hone a student's knowledge of his/her chosen profession
2. To verify that the profession is a good choice given the student's aptitudes and interests
3. To assess the best methods for achieving professional success
4. To develop faculty contacts
5. To improve each student's research, writing, and discussion skills

During the first semester of the freshman year, as part of a first-year experience class, the student assesses personal aptitudes and interests, describes career goals, and investigates experiential learning opportunities. In a one-on-one tutorial setting during the sophomore through senior years, the student receives individualized attention from the mentor on the student's chosen profession and how to be a competitive candidate for that profession. The student and mentor meet every two weeks during the fall semester of each year to engage in a program of research, writing, discussion, and strategizing about the student's post-graduate goals. At the beginning of the sophomore, junior, and senior years, the student self-reflects and reports on the previous year's preparations for post-graduate goals. Then, the student develops a plan for the coming year to become more competitive for post-graduate endeavors. Typical areas of research, discussion, and pursuit include internships, research projects, study abroad opportunities, summer work experience, graduate schools, and prospective employers.

During these meetings, the student reviews past discussions of the future career and new questions that have come to mind. Research topics often

include characteristics of the chosen career, specific companies for future employment, study abroad options, undergraduate research projects and conferences, and post-graduate scholarships. The student gathers information by reading relevant materials and conducting interviews of those who work in the field and then writes a report summarizing what has been learned. A student who is uncertain of what to research regarding the chosen profession is assigned readings on topical material or interactions with a campus expert to gain insight. The findings and corresponding report are the starting point for subsequent meetings. The goal is no less than five meetings and ten written pages during the semester.

The goals and focus of the one-on-one conversations vary slightly depending on the student's class year. The outline below presents a beneficial conversational framework.

- Freshman year: The student is tasked with getting to know at least one faculty member in his or her major. The student is informed of available experiential learning opportunities, such as study abroad, a Washington semester, and undergraduate research. The student discusses his or her intended major, personal aptitudes, and general career goals. A portion of students have a lifetime dream career in mind but have never fully examined if this career is a realistic, desirable career goal. Because a variety of pitfalls may prevent this dream career from coming to fruition, the student should consider a Plan B.
- Sophomore year: The discussion starts with "What are your career plans?" and transitions to "What do you know about that profession?" and "Whom do you know who works in this field?" From there, the student reads relevant material and/or interviews someone about this profession. The student conducts this research, writes a summary report, and returns to discuss the findings. The student then develops an experiential summer plan, i.e., an internship, volunteer work, study abroad, or undergraduate research project, which will give both experience and a knowledge base to assess if the planned career path is a good fit.
- Junior year: The conversation starts with "What did you do this summer?" and "What are your career plans now?" To deepen the student's professional knowledge, experience, and connections, he or she is asked to reach out to relevant faculty, to read a faculty publication and discuss it with the author, to continue research in his or her major,

and to begin planning for the next summer opportunity. The student is encouraged to consider various post-graduate scholarship opportunities, to narrow down the graduate school possibilities, and/or to research employers of interest.

- Senior year: The conversations are much like those with the juniors, focusing on pursuing prospective employers, graduate schools, or professional schools. The student learns to write scholarship and graduate school applications, if applicable, and fine-tunes résumés, personal statements, and admissions or scholarship essays in addition to preparing for interviews.

Although time-intensive, this approach keeps students' future career goals in focus and encourages students to examine and alter their career goals as they grow and mature in their college studies. It also guarantees that the students have contact with their mentor throughout the semester, not just when it is time to register for classes or get recommendation letters.

This structured plan, which is a mix of both academic advising and career counseling, is foundational to career readiness. The program does not replace the services offered by both the departmental academic advisors and the career center but instead brings them together into a structured, recurrent, one-on-one conversation with a faculty mentor. This approach is not only in line with the recommended developmental advising approach but also provides the personal, one-on-one relationship that Millennials desire.

IMPLEMENTATION OF A PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This credit-bearing, four-year plan has been implemented in The Citadel Honors Program for over two decades. The course was originally phased in for sophomores and juniors in 1995 and then expanded to include all honors program students the following year. For the first few years, the class was optional for honors students, but student feedback indicated that the process was so beneficial that the course became mandatory for honors program graduation.

This personal and professional development plan has two components: the freshman introduction course, taught in a group setting, and the three-year individualized course series, taught entirely in one-on-one tutorials. The honors director serves as a faculty mentor for all the honors students, teaches

the first-year experience course section for all honors freshmen, and leads the Personal and Professional Development class series for all honors sophomores, juniors, and seniors. All honors students still have academic advisors within their majors to maintain consistency with the process for non-honors students.

The first-year experience class incorporates assessments of learning styles and core values, presentations on experiential learning opportunities, and interactions with career services personnel. The honors section of this class, taught by the honors director, provides an initial opportunity to encourage participation in experiential learning opportunities and to create a written statement of career goals and professional plans.

LEADERSHIP 101: FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR (One Credit Hour)

LDRS 101 provides the academic and life skills to help students make a successful transition to college as well as to the unique environment of The Citadel. Students develop their academic skills—i.e., reading, listening, note-taking, test-taking, time management, and research—and are introduced to campus facilities, resources, and support services. (*The Citadel Course Catalog* 104)

The goals for students are outlined in The Citadel's *Leadership 101: The Freshman Experience*:

- Learn how to and make a successful transition from high school to college
- Examine and understand the purposes of higher education and the practice of intellectual engagement
- Learn about and develop critical thinking skills and effective time-management strategies
- Learn about and plan a course of study that is consistent with and supportive of the student's interests, abilities, and career goals
- Learn about the Study Abroad Program and internship opportunities that may enhance the educational experience

The three-year class series for honors sophomores, juniors, and seniors is a structured, individualized approach to assessing a student's talents and

strategizing to achieve professional goals. Meeting with each student one-on-one, the honors director creates a mentorship, learning, and accountability process for developing a professional plan. The focus of the research, writings, and discussions is individualized by student and class year.

HONR 211, 311, and 411: Honors Personal and Professional Development I, II, and III

Taught entirely in tutorial, this sequence directs students in a three-year period of research, writing, and discussion on the subject of their professional goals, encouraging them to envision their leadership in their future profession and guiding them in exploring through research and writing the ideals as well as the facts of that profession. Three credit hours (PASS/FAIL) are granted upon completion of HONR 411. (*The Citadel Course Catalog* 103)

This class series motivates students to research and plan for their careers and to focus on what they will do after graduation. The structure of the series, as a continually iterative process of exploration, discussion, and decision-making, uncovers and allows for alterations in goals and aspirations. Career paths and interests change as students get further into their coursework, interact with faculty, undertake research or internships, and investigate what it means to be a member of their chosen profession. Moreover, students' semester abroad experiences, their interactions with faculty, and their research raise their curiosity, their aspirations, and their confidence.

As an example of the success of this plan, a young man stated during his college interview that he planned to major in either business or political science and have a career in the Army after graduation. During his freshman year, through the first-year experience class taught by his mentor, he learned about the Washington Semester Program, undergraduate research opportunities, and study abroad options. He applied for the Washington Semester Program and was accepted for the fall semester of 2008. He spent the summer of 2008 attending the competitive Army Airborne school; then he spent the fall Washington semester as a fellow in the national office of a U.S. congressman. He returned to college for the spring semester, immediately beginning a research project in the political science department, as encouraged by his faculty mentor. Additionally, during the spring 2009 semester he pursued and received a scholarship for a summer study abroad, which he spent in Spain. When he returned to college in the fall of 2009, he was a junior who had proudly studied away in Spain and Washington, D.C., and worked on a research project

in his major. In conversations during his junior year (HONR 311), he still planned on a long career in the military followed by a government-related job. He continued to excel in the Army ROTC program and held a high-level leadership position within the student body. His leadership abilities, interest and experience in politics, and academic abilities led to the suggestion of a possible law career. By the start of his senior year, he was studying for the LSAT and acting as the Judge Advocate General (JAG) for the Citadel Army ROTC department. Upon graduation, he attended Duke University School of Law. He is now a lawyer and an officer in the U.S. Army.

The encouragement, the information on relevant educational opportunities outside of the standard curriculum for his major, and the assistance provided through the four-year Personal and Professional Development approach were beneficial to his path and his success.

SUPPORT FROM OUR STUDENTS

Feedback from The Citadel Honors Program students indicates that the one-on-one meetings have an impact. The following quotations are typical of feedback from students:

The biggest benefit of the Personal and Professional Development classes was the one-on-one interactions with [the honors director]. I have always had a “wing-it” attitude about major life decisions, so sitting down with him and regularly discussing my future plans has helped me a great deal. These discussions, readings, and papers did make me realize that I needed to pursue employment that would benefit me in the future. I took an internship in the purchasing department of a local company after sophomore year partially because HONR 211 clued me in to the reality of my professional life. These classes have also helped me greatly in my postgraduate plans. I have flirted with the idea of law school for a while, but most of my productive research has come from HONR 311/411. These meetings and papers have allowed me to flesh out my ideas, identify what is important to me, and then find options that fit my values.

* * *

The Personal and Professional Development class was very helpful in its own way, each year that I took it. In my sophomore year, I was exposed to many different paths that could be taken with my

career. [The honors director] encouraged further education, as well as scholarly programs and scholarships to apply for. After I decided I didn't want to take that route, [the director] guided me towards professional development. During my junior year I landed an internship for the following summer, so [the director] gave me many tools and tips to set myself apart from my peers. During my senior year the class helped me polish my skills and expose me to an even greater variety of accounting professions. [The director] sent me various articles and journals that taught me more about my accounting profession than any accounting class had thus far. In all, it was very helpful to have a mentor who was geared towards helping me individually. [The director] was very persistent in pushing me to develop myself over the course of my college career.

A quantitative correlation study on the specific effect of this course on graduate school attendance rates and job satisfaction has not yet been done. While honors program graduation rates, graduate school acceptance rates, and persistence in career path following graduation are high, the direct correlation solely to this course has not been established. However, qualitative surveys of The Citadel Honors Program alumni consistently produce comments that the Personal and Professional Development plan was high-impact. Alumni value the discussions of career goals over all four years and the opportunities for meaningful experiential learning experiences both to gain real-world knowledge and to differentiate them from other candidates for post-graduate opportunities.

OTHER POINTS

The Citadel Honors Program is mid-sized, with approximately a hundred students. Admittedly, the program size contributes to the feasibility and successful execution of this course, but the approach, focus, and framework could be modified for larger programs. For example, the course could have sophomores and juniors meet predominately in groups based on major and career goals. Then, the students could present to the group and discuss research on careers, graduate schools, companies, and related topics. For maximum impact, there should be some one-on-one mentorship, however, to supplement the group meetings.

CONCLUSION

This four-year, one-on-one Personal and Professional Development course model reflects the best practices in advising and career counseling. This individualized mentor/advising program encourages research, writing, and discussion on the topic of the student's future. The approach influences students' ability to recognize their talents, skills, interests, and experiences. Additionally, the program encourages students to take actions to ensure that they are well-positioned to pursue their post-graduate goals. This course of study, combined with a rigorous undergraduate curriculum, produces a mature, critical thinker who is poised for a successful career.

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Honors in Practice

***HIP* THEN**

Tenure and Promotion in Honors

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The *Chronicle of Higher Education Review* (2/11/05) published an article on “Collaborative Efforts: Promoting Interdisciplinary Scholars” by Stephanie L. Pfirman, James P. Collins, Susan Lowes, and Anthony F. Michaels. They wrote, “Creative research and teaching increasingly occur at the junction between traditional disciplines. As a result, many colleges and universities have committed themselves to fostering interdisciplinary scholarship. But the scholars who work at that junction are confronted with conventional departmental hiring, review, and tenure procedures that are not suited to interdisciplinary work and can slow or block the progress of their careers.”

The Honors Program at the University of New Mexico has nine full-time faculty members. It is important that full-time faculty dedicated to Honors education should have equal privileges as other faculty on campus in terms of their careers. The best way to accomplish this goal was to establish hiring, review, tenure, and promotion processes for faculty in the Honors Program. The process for UNM’s University Honors Program faculty had to be created so that it would observe criteria for other faculty on campus and, at the same

time, include principles for interdisciplinary work. For the most part, the process has worked although some of the expectations are more encompassing than those for faculty in a specific discipline.

The UNM Honors Program (UHP), which has approximately 1400 students, is primarily interdisciplinary. The University also has departmental honors opportunities in various departments, and the UHP will accept those credit hours toward graduation with Honors. This enables students to complete a broad, liberal arts, interdisciplinary honors education as well as an in-depth research project or thesis in their major. It is, however, the interdisciplinary character of the program that has led us to address various issues related to the concerns posed by Pfirman et al. above.

Because of the nature of the program, we have many ongoing endeavors and student activities or programs that require hiring some full-time continuing faculty, especially because one director would not be able to accomplish all of these activities. Full-time faculty in the Honors Program serve as mentors and coordinators for such activities. Dr. Leslie Donovan, for example, serves as the mentor, teacher, and advisor for *Scribendi*, the literary and arts magazine that publishes original pieces by honors students from the Western Regional Honors Council. Other full-time faculty assist with mentoring students for national and international fellowships and scholarships; coordinate theses or final senior projects; coordinate the student-teachers; direct international UHP programs such as Conexiones in Spain and Mexico and the Honors Biodiversity Program in Australia; and serve as the advisors for the Honors Student Advisory Council and the Honors Residence Hall. These faculty also teach interdisciplinary honors courses and serve as program advisors. Additional courses are taught by faculty from other departments on campus or visiting instructors.

Although often pressured to hire faculty with joint appointments, as director I have resisted primarily because of the substantial amount of work required of full-time faculty in Honors. I have also found that hiring faculty with one or more departmental appointments becomes problematic. The appointment must spell out the research, teaching, service, and other obligations for all departments involved at the time of hire. Having homes in several departments often means that faculty members have two or more full-time jobs. Very often they have limited "face time" in their "home" departments. In some units, they are not at home anywhere, or are at home everywhere, and may have to do extra duty and attend to multiple sets of tasks such as departmental meetings, for instance. In practice, these faculty, although

holding a full-time contract, are often treated as part-time faculty in each of the departments. Most often, these faculty “belong” more to one department than another, which may cause friction and a schizophrenic frame of mind for the faculty member. Tenuring a faculty member in a department and “borrowing” him or her to work full-time in honors creates its own set of challenges. The department would have the final say in who is hired, and the faculty member tenured elsewhere would have the option of leaving the Honors Program at any time.

The full-time faculty members in the UNM Honors Program received doctorates in traditional disciplines including anthropology, biology, English, French, American studies, and history, but they have made honors their professional focus. So, the challenge was to determine how these professionals were to advance in this profession. How were they to be rewarded? Specifically, how could they be tenured and promoted?

The University Honors Program has a national reputation for academic innovation, educational research, quality of teaching, and commitment to teaching. It is within this context that criteria to define the competence and excellence required for promotion and tenure have been developed. Competence and excellence in scholarship, teaching, and service are evaluated both on quality and quantity parameters.

One of the major obstacles toward tenure and promotion in honors programs and colleges is that “Honors” is not a discipline. This does not mean, however, that honors education is not a profession. There is sufficient evidence across the country to indicate that there are educators in higher education who choose to work in honors programs or colleges exclusively. Dr. Donovan, mentioned earlier, is a UHP alumnus, and we have several UHP alumni who come back as adjunct faculty. Several alumni who plan to become professors have said that they want to make honors their professional focus. In addition, many colleges and universities have committed themselves to fostering interdisciplinary scholarship, which is the cornerstone of most honors programs and colleges.

Interdisciplinary scholars frequently face a set of common difficulties in their research, teaching, and administrative roles. Interdisciplinary research often entails special challenges because of the high networking costs: colleagues with different priorities and different field seasons, and disciplinary language barriers. Time and energy are also required to make and maintain connections, including vetting and editing documents with many authors. Interdisciplinary education supports the notion that all subjects are intimately

related. In most departments, however, these relationships are often ignored and teachers are encouraged to focus on one area of specialization. The principal barrier to interdisciplinary research has been the pattern of university organization that creates vested interests in traditionally defined departments. Administratively, all educational activity needs to “belong” somewhere in order to be accounted for and supported.

I recently learned of an institution that did not include its honors program in the new marketing and recruitment materials because the program did not grant degrees. Generally, courses must be offered through a department, and students are asked to place themselves in one college or another. The limitations on this kind of structure are recognized in every university by defining new departments, approving new programs, and creating centers in which to house courses, often experimental, that do not fit into the disciplines. At the University of New Mexico, University College was reorganized to accommodate many of the interdisciplinary programs that had been created in recent years. The Honors Program, although founded in 1960 and having shifted from the Provost’s office to that of one or another of the Associate Provosts, was included under the umbrella of University College. Having a “home” under an established college has strengthened the Honors Program’s ability to establish reasonable criteria for tenure and promotion comparable to other units on campus.

Tenure and promotion decisions in Honors, as in other departments on campus, require established excellence in at least two areas and at least some level of competence in the third (teaching, scholarship, service). But what is excellence in an interdisciplinary program such as honors, and what is excellence in teaching in such an interdisciplinary field? Departments find that, for passing judgment on peers, research productivity is a much more manageable criterion than teaching effectiveness. Student evaluations and alumni testimonials have been notoriously weak evidence, and reliable self-evaluation is all but impossible. At this point, promotion and tenure committees still find teaching effectiveness difficult to measure. Publication is at least a perceptible tool; the relative ease of its use has reinforced the reliance on it for tenure and promotion decisions. Evaluating good teaching may always be difficult, but effective integration of research and teaching should be observable, as should the development of interdisciplinary approaches to learning.

The typical department in a research university will assert that it places a high value on effective teaching. It will be able to cite faculty members among its ranks who take conspicuous pride in their reputations as successful

teachers; it may be able to point to student evaluations that give consistently high ratings to many of its members. At the same time, however, discussions concerning tenure and promotion are likely to focus almost entirely on research or creative productivity. The department head, when making recommendations, may look almost exclusively at research and penalize junior faculty who seem to give disproportionate time and attention to teaching or to experimental or interdisciplinary courses.

Because the mission of the University Honors Program is primarily to provide an interdisciplinary, enhancing education for undergraduates, teaching is a major criterion in assessing UHP faculty. Consequently, in their tenure packets (portfolios), faculty are expected to provide a statement on teaching, including a brief discussion of perceived successes, future goals, and expectations. Of course, teaching evaluations are also part of the portfolio as are sample syllabi, materials developed for classes, special programs such as field-based courses, service-learning components of courses, and other teaching materials.

Co-teaching is often a strong component of honors courses. Students benefit from having two or more teachers, and this arrangement is an excellent way to achieve interdisciplinary perspectives. However, without full-time faculty status in honors, faculty members frequently get credit for only part of the course. Coordinating course development, teaching, and the administration of assignments and grading is significantly more difficult than providing two separate courses. Moreover, departments are usually credited with just one half of the students; often these classes are electives and therefore not considered by departments to be as important as foundational classes. This becomes more problematic in tough budgetary times when departments are scrambling for more dollars and higher FTEs.

In 1895, the first president of the University of Chicago, William Rainey Harper, asked each new faculty member to agree in writing that advancements in rank and salary would be governed chiefly by research productivity. This stipulation, novel in its time, would raise few eyebrows in most research universities a century later. They might claim otherwise, but research universities consider “success” and “research productivity” to be virtually synonymous. It’s the old “publish or perish” standard.

Research and study are certainly important to inform one’s teaching and to expand a faculty member’s individual knowledge. However, scholarship need not be in conventional disciplinary research. Some alternative activities include development of new teaching techniques and programs;

and recognition by peers for contributing ideas to and/or advancing honors education. To ensure that such activities are given proper consideration, proper documentation of these kinds of scholarship must be included in the portfolio. Most important, such contributions should have some recognition beyond the boundaries of the University of New Mexico.

When publications are evaluated, attention should be paid to the pedagogical quality of the work as well as its contribution to scholarship. We have emphasized that honors is a community of learners. Faculty and students contribute their particular combinations of imagination, experience, and accumulated knowledge. The divisions that have been created between teacher and pupil are often artificial and counter-productive and must be bridged for effective collaborations to occur.

To be considered competent in scholarship/research/creative works, the individual must show activity comparable to others of the same rank within Honors at an average or above average level. This will usually include works published in appropriate venues such as the *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council*, the former *National Honors Report*, or the new *Honors in Practice*. Faculty may also publish in appropriate journals in fields that complement their work in honors. Younger faculty are often more at ease with technology and more adept at publishing in e-journals. The rapid growth of information and communication technology plays a critical role in restructuring the mechanisms by which specialized academic knowledge is validated, distributed, and made available. The academic reward system is structured to encourage quality scholarship primarily in the form of publications, and the number of e-journals is growing. Review teams must then be conscious of the parameters, process, and quality of publishing in this venue.

Scholarship/research/creative activities may also be characterized by continuity. Strategies and designs that further honors curricula, teaching, and programmatic activities must be considered. Books, articles (especially in peer-reviewed journals), creative works, grants, and presentations at professional conferences are all suitable materials (resources) for tenure and promotion consideration.

Service activity is often less problematic. At many institutions, junior faculty are simply told not to do any but to concentrate their time and efforts on scholarship. Service, however, is important. Think of all of the committee work that would not be done without the volunteer services of faculty. Special contributions, such as acting as chair of a professional meeting session or serving on an honors committee, not only bring visibility, acknowledgment, and

standing in the community, but they keep the world going round! Committee work also contributes to the dialogue of the professional community. Faculty who engage in activities within their local (university and community) and broader professional communities (NCHC, regional honors councils, and discipline-specific organizations) maintain a vitality that not only enhances their careers but benefits others as well.

Because the full-time faculty in honors cannot be pigeon-holed into one discipline or field, the guidelines for promotion and tenure have to be flexible. Thus, for example, at UNM we form Tenure and Promotion Committees individual to each faculty member on tenure-track. Dr. Ursula Shepherd, for example, received a Ph.D. in biology. Her committee consisted of two biology professors; an associate provost, who, although a music professor, was interdisciplinary in her scholarship, teaching, and projects; an American studies professor, whose focus has been on environmental issues (American studies itself being an interdisciplinary field); and an associate professor from the Centennial Library (science and engineering branch). External reviewers for Dr. Shepherd included honors individuals across the country as well as biology professors. Dr. Shepherd's scholarship included work in biology, honors, nature writing, and field-based programs. The majority of her work is interdisciplinary.

Dr. Troy Lovata, whose Ph.D. is in anthropology, is currently in his third year of a tenure-track appointment. His committee consists of three faculty from the Anthropology Department and three tenured faculty in the Honors Program. There may come a time when all of the full-time faculty in the Honors Program are tenured, but even then I think it would be beneficial to include one or two faculty from fields related to the tenure-track faculty member's discipline. It is also advantageous to include professors on campus who have clout and are well respected. We try whenever possible to include faculty who have either taught in the Honors Program or have served on the Honors Council.

The tenure and promotion process for honors faculty continues to evolve at the University of New Mexico. Thus far, we have four tenured faculty members. As the members of the National Collegiate Honors Council become more professionally committed to honors endeavors, and as more honors programs and colleges institute tenure and promotion in honors, it will become less problematic to constitute acceptable and equitable guidelines for tenure and promotion in honors.

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Honors in Chile: New Engagements in the Higher Education System

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ABSTRACT

Honors programs are rare in Latin America, and in Chile they were unknown before 2003. At the Universidad Austral de Chile, an interdisciplinary group of scholars linked to environmental studies put forward a pilot project for implementing a new experience in higher education. Challenged by an educational environment where (i) apathy and mediocrity have taken over the classrooms, (ii) monodisciplinary training rules the university

campus, and (iii) authoritarian teaching persists, this has been an experiment in new ways of approaching the classroom. Stimulated by experiences in the USA, a project proposal was written, finding support in the Chilean Ministry of Education. Three years of experience have proven that a Chilean honors program can serve as a model for programs elsewhere in Latin America. In the following pages we aim to provide a summary of what this experience has meant, using the most recent class as an example. Some background about the university and the Chilean system needs to be supplied, while most of the paper deals with the particular features of this program and its immediate future.

This paper describes the honors experience at the Universidad Austral de Chile (UACH). The UACH program is of interest not only because of its Latin American context, but also because it is focused on a particular theme, Environmental Studies and Sustainable Human Development. After three years, the program has just completed its pilot phase, and so the time is appropriate to describe its accomplishments and challenges.

INTRODUCTION: THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The Universidad Austral de Chile, located in the southern city of Valdivia, was founded in 1954. A state-sponsored regional university, UACH is among the five leading universities in the country. A body of almost 10,000 undergraduate students is distributed in its 38 schools (*escuelas*), which fall under the university's 10 faculties (*facultades*). The 665 professors belong to 69 institutes (*institutos*), or research/teaching units.¹

Improving the quality of higher education has been a permanent, although not achieved, goal in the university. The low academic performance of the incoming students and their lack of motivation impede attaining this goal. Most of the UACH students belong to the lower socioeconomic brackets, and many of them come from families whose parents have never received a higher education. They graduate from public or publicly subsidized schools with extremely poor academic records. Selection in the Chilean university system operates through a national test, and students with higher scores are concentrated in the capital city of Santiago. Regional universities lag behind the Santiago universities in the students' aspirations; students see a better

¹ The Universidad Austral de Chile offers ten Ph.D. programs, mainly in sciences and humanities, along with 21 masters programs.

future if graduating from an institution where all academic and non-academic resources are concentrated.

Limitations other than the low academic skills of the students affect the university, including its provision of rigid, traditional classes that tend more to the reproduction of existing knowledge than to the acquisition of learning skills or the development of a passion for new knowledge. Non-academic factors that contribute to poor performance among students at UACH are the rainy environment and lack of recreational opportunities during the long winter period.

However, some opportunities for reversing these trends are available in the system. On the one hand, UACH has a great infrastructure, including computer labs and access to information technologies, library, and classroom facilities. The Chilean Ministry of Education is pumping new resources into the system; most of these have gone into the construction of new buildings and the renewal of equipment. A growing concern about inequities in the higher education system favors innovative initiatives that could help in finding new avenues for better prospects in the university system (Brunner et al. 2005).

The Chilean educational system, like many in Latin America, is highly rigid. Upon finishing high school, students choose a *carera* ("career") to pursue in the university. Such careers are traditional fields of knowledge that lead to an academic degree (licentiate) and a professional title after a four-year cycle. Programs are fixed, and each cohort follows the same path. As a result, students acquire specific perspectives and tools that enable them to reproduce this knowledge. In spite of many able students and dedicated faculty, the educational environment is characterized by authoritarian teaching and by apathy and mediocrity in the classroom. Monodisciplinary training rules the university campus. Critical thinking, passionate research, meaningful learning experiences, and serendipity are, for the most part, absent in this model.

The Center for Environmental Studies (CEAM) at the Universidad Austral de Chile is a counterpoint to this structure. CEAM is a transdisciplinary space created in 2002 to bring together faculty from the natural and social sciences to study environmental problems and contribute to policy making at the national and local levels. The university has an important group of researchers from diverse fields of knowledge working on these issues. The Center for Environmental Studies was designed to be a link between the university and the community, and between research and teaching.

THE HONORS PROGRAM IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES AND HUMAN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (PILOT PHASE)

The Honors Program proposal was inspired by U.S. experiences (Fuiks and Clark 2000, Long 1995, Schuman 1995). What makes the Chilean program different is that it targets a specific field of thought: environmental studies and sustainable human development. The thematic orientation of the program was no accident since it was developed by the same faculty who organized the Center for Environmental Studies.

However, beyond the program's subject matter, there was a deep concern about the quality of undergraduate studies in the university. The program was seen as an opportunity for improving teaching and for finding new ways of creating a classroom environment consistent with the needs of the student body. The underlying idea was to radiate the ideals of an experience-centered approach to learning from the Honors Program to the rest of the school. This aim was based on the notions that good work deserves to be recognized and that, if given the opportunity, students would develop academic skills that otherwise are neutralized under the pressure of a peer-conformist atmosphere.

The Honors Program was, likewise, conceived as a local contribution to the process of improving higher education at the national level. As such it was submitted for a grant from the National Ministry of Education along the lines of innovation in the academy. The local project was not only to transform the UACH undergraduate teaching system but to help other regional universities achieve similar goals.

The Honors pilot project, from the point of view of the University's strategic plan, is the most important teaching initiative of CEAM. It contributes to the aims of "transforming nature as well as knowledge" and of "searching for answers beyond the horizon"; and by providing a transdisciplinary view of environmental issues, it helps to promote a better integration of the university's resources. It also becomes a symbol of a university striving to find new avenues for improved teaching.

The Honors Program is physically as well as institutionally located in CEAM, one of four A-frame houses on the campus. Originally built as faculty housing, the Center has three stories of offices, a kitchen, and a large conference room for classes and meetings. Honors students have a place to go, and they are found in every part of "Casa 4." The picture windows of the house overlook the river that separates the campus from the center of Valdivia. Open to the city and seen from the city, Casa 4 is an apt symbol of the connection the Honors Program makes between the campus and the region.

The goal was to create a transdisciplinary learning setting for undergraduate students from all fields of knowledge, focusing on environmental studies and sustainable human development. The topic is consistent with the university's strengths, which include ecology and humanities, and with a region where native forests, biodiversity, and wildlife are undergoing increasing stress. The Honors Program pilot project was funded through a grant competition of the MECESUP Program of the Chilean Ministry of Education (MECESUP AUS 0202).

The Honors Program has operated with the following guidelines:

- i. To work with an incoming cohort of twenty students, selected among the best second- and third-year applicants.
- ii. To offer a seminar taught by at least three professors coming from different faculties, followed by two other seminars. After completing three seminars, students qualify for receiving the distinction of Honors on their diploma when they graduate.
- iii. To include a seminar style for classes, enhanced by field activities, and participation in the classroom not only of students and faculty but also community members and experts.
- iv. To consider non-traditional forms of evaluation. The program defined "academic products" as a means of summarizing the students' learning. Such products consist of a synthesis of the acquired knowledge, supported by any technical device (a Powerpoint presentation, a bulletin, a poster, a representation, or whatever other means available), open to public scrutiny.

Based on this schema, the program has already served three different cohorts from the second semester of 2003 through the second semester of 2005. One hundred forty students from 30 careers have applied to the Program, 60 of them being enrolled. Of these, more than 40% have completed the program.²

The program has been advertised through the university website, and a yearly recruitment process is held. Students apply on a voluntary basis, although they may be encouraged by faculty. The selection process involves a review of the academic background and interviews of the prospective

² Students are recruited from the three university campuses: Miraflores and Isla Teja in Valdivia, and Puerto Montt in that city. A problem has been to sustain the Puerto Montt students' participation: they must travel for three hours each way to attend the class, and it hasn't been easy to retain them.

students. Main selection criteria include: GPA; motivation as substantiated in personal experience, interviews, and references; and an even distribution of students across different fields.

The seminars that have been offered are the following:

- From Multiple to Trans: Tasting Serendipity
- Coastal Maritime Biodiversity in the Chilean South
- Theory and Solution of Problems of Conservation Biology
- Global Change
- Environmental and Cultural History of the Southern Chilean Temperate Forests
- Associative Entrepreneurship for the Sustainable Development in Rural Communities
- Water as a Means for Learning about the Ecosystem and its Sustainable Use
- Bioethics, Sustainable Development and Conservation in Natural areas in Chile
- Philosophies of Development: Epistemologies, and Biology of Knowledge

An estimated fifty-five faculty have participated in the experience, thirty-four of them coming from UACH, the rest from other universities and research centers. Among them are geologists, marine biologists, ecologists, philosophers, economists, social scientists, zoologists, and foresters. In addition, a significant number of organizers, experts, and other guests have participated in these seminars. Similarly, international visitors, mainly from the United States but also from South Africa and Brazil, have joined the experience.

PHILOSOPHIES OF DEVELOPMENT: AN ALTERNATIVE PEDAGOGY

To give a more concrete idea of the pedagogical approach of the UACH Honors program, we describe the most recent seminar, "Philosophies of Development," which was taught during the second semester of 2005. The coordinator of the course was Carlos Alberto Cioce Sampaio, a Brazilian

professor of development studies who was conducting a postdoctoral program at CEAM. This class was inspired by the need for working with the students to find new, alternative avenues for community development. Rather than abstract discussions of development philosophy, the course focused on the real needs of a rural community about forty-five minutes from the university campus. The community of Tralcao with its indigenous organization, Tralmapu, was chosen as the site for this experience.

The theoretical layout of the class included three modules: Epistemologies of Knowledge, Biology of Knowledge, and Cultural and Socioeconomic Change. Two hypotheses were considered (*ex ante*) that connected these modules: (1) Socioeconomy is based on new forms of social action oriented not only by a utilitarian rationality but also by a more values-based rationality rooted in local knowledge (sometimes derogatively seen as “subjective”); and (2) that subjectivity may become a means of enriching the decision-making process (Tuan 1980; Berkes 1996; Lévi-Strauss 1997; Oyarzún 1998; Varela 2003; Maturana, Varela 2001). As suggested by Max-Neef (2005), to deny subjectivity is to deny differences and the individuality of the human being.

The theme of Socioeconomy can be understood through methodologies of participatory, decentralized, and socially and environmentally responsible organizational management. This type of management has an emphasis on networks of organizations where traditional/popular knowledge is valued. This type of organization can generate ideas and proposals, under the eye of local people, that are not disengaged or distanced from the details of everyday life.

What connects the three modules in the course is the search for practical elements that help to improve the well-being of disadvantaged communities through the sustainable use of natural resources. So a principal objective was to reflect critically on models of development and to explore alternatives based on a new model, called Socioeconomy, characterized by cooperation, solidarity, and the articulation of experiences. The Socioeconomy model is based on a new culture that values popular knowledge as well as academic knowledge, practical knowledge as well as theoretical, local solutions as well as external ones; that supports innovation and creativity; that seeks to recognize the characteristics that give us identity in a global context; that proposes a new university closer to the community, capable of speaking a simple language and at the same time a scientific language, proposals that are based on the biology of knowledge and human evolution. The specific objectives were to: (a) identify Chilean experiences that move in the direction of Socioeconomy,

under criteria pointed out by Sampaio (2005); and (b) produce materials that can serve as a proposal for implanting Socioeconomy practices in the Tralcao Mapu Indigenous Community Project (Sampaio, Otero, Skewes 2005; Skewes, Sampaio, Egaña 2005).

The community of Tralcao had been working with the university to explore opportunities for ecotourism based largely on birdwatching. This is because Tralcao is located in the Rio Cruces Nature Sanctuary, a renowned site for migratory birds and especially known for its black-necked swans (*Cygnus melancorypha*). It is part of the municipality of San Jose de la Mariquina (Lakes Region), which is linked to the Sustainable Ecoregion Program of the Lakes Region, an initiative of the non-governmental organization Agenda 21, and supported by other units of the Universidad Austral de Chile: the Institute of Tourism, with its Diploma in Rural Tourism; the School of Anthropology through the dissertation of one of its students; and CEAM, through a post-doctoral project. Tralcao has faced unexpected environmental stress since 2004, when the opening of a paper pulp mill upstream resulted in the disappearance of the black-necked swans. The community was faced with few alternatives.

For their class projects, the students identified diverse projects that could potentially help the community in confronting its new circumstances. At an initial visit to Tralcao, students met with community members and informed them about the plans for the class. The students organized themselves into small groups to identify successful community projects in different parts of Chile. These projects were examples of community-based local socioproductive agreements.

These agreements are micro initiatives where raw competition is bypassed by actions that privilege a horizontal network of cooperation. The idea is to add value to small businesses, increasing the survival chances for small entrepreneurs facing an encroaching market. The notion of “community-based” suggests alternative modes of production and distribution. Community cuts across gender, territoriality and poverty. This represents a local alternative for the inclusion of marginalized (“shoeless”) people, stimulating policies that would avoid the high rates of bankruptcy among local initiatives, a result of unequal access to the market. In their aim to survive competition, most of these initiatives, otherwise known as informal, rely upon low wages, fraud, postponement of social security contributions and taxes, self-exploitation and even depletion of nature (Sampaio 1996; Sachs 2003; Araujo, Sampaio, Souza 2004).

The students relied upon secondary sources and interviews with experts to develop their presentations. Each week during the semester the class focused on a specific project. The student group's presentation was followed by commentaries from two experts (a scientist and a "shoeless" philosopher, a non-academic community member) and open discussion by the rest of the class. A record was kept of each session, and the learning in the discussion was meant to improve the group's project.

The final session of the class was a public presentation to the Tralcao community of the students' findings. Community members were asked to evaluate each of the projects, based on the project's presentation and a poster, considering simplicity of language, intelligibility, and pertinence and feasibility for the local organization.

Currently the community is choosing which among the demonstration projects presented by the students have the greatest possibility for replicability in the community. Institutionally, the community is trying to create the conditions for becoming an incubator of local community-based projects in the area served by UACH.

The students had the experience of looking at potential community projects, presenting their findings in a public setting directly to the people most concerned, and getting feedback not only from their peers and teachers but from the community itself.

EVALUATION

An initial evaluation of the program, based on a survey and informal interviews, suggested the following conclusions for the Pilot Phase:

- i. As an overall indication of the degree of satisfaction, out of seven points, participating students evaluated the program with a 5.9 while participating faculty with a 5.7, and the chairs of the different schools with a 5.1. These averages are well above those for any *career* in the university, which rarely reach the 5.0 level.
- ii. The program is acknowledged as forging the competencies which it aims for: critical thought, transdisciplinary integration, team working, practical engagement, and environmental awareness. Students perceived themselves as changed in their way of understanding and acting upon the world.

In interviews, students reported that one of the most stimulating experiences for them in the program was to see how excited the faculty members became when working with colleagues from other disciplines in the team-taught courses. Faculty members reported the same experience.

Transdisciplinary experiences, as when students in the course on Environmental and Cultural History of the Southern Chilean Temperate Forests got to work in the carbon analysis laboratory, or the community engagement of engineering students are among the most valued experiences reported by the students, who believe that such experiences have changed their way of understanding the world.

Another important component valued by students in their learning experience has been the opportunity of publicly sharing the products of their work. Each seminar has ended with a public display of the academic products achieved during the semester. The most important of these was the exhibit about Conservation, Global Change and Sustainability that was displayed in the university's Great Hall as part of the commemoration of the university's fiftieth anniversary.

- iii. The physical setting of the program is an important component. This house provides students with a rare intellectual "home," which they use with enthusiasm.

A crucial point in the program's history was its evaluation by professor Bernice Braid, a former president of the NCHC, in November 2005. Professor Braid received a self-evaluation report that she had the opportunity to compare to her own findings through a field visit. Her report is eloquent in her concluding remarks:

It is astonishing how completely this fledgling Honors Program, even in its Pilot years, has sought to embody the full range of attributes of highly successful and long running honors programs. . . .

There is already in place a structure, a clear sense of the value of Honors in itself and for UACH, and a cadre of professionals on campus who can help to build on the foundation already established. Since this Program operates like a departmental honors program, it could well flourish on campus with other similar transdisciplinary programs. Where others developed, the model of this one should prove instructive, and all should be encouraged to work together in open houses and other forums where the general public is invited. . . . It is clear that I recommend not only that this Honors Program—Environmental

Studies and Sustainable Human Development—be continued, but be used as a model for the establishment of parallel Honors opportunities if such are proposed.

Braid ends by suggesting that the experience be written about, “so that Chile, Latin America, and the world know more about how much the Program has accomplished in just three years, and how much it has to offer others for them to emulate.”

CHALLENGES

Overall, the Honors experience has demonstrated its aptness for a Latin American regional university such as UACH. Such is the perception not only of direct participants, but also of other community members. The experience is seen by chairs of the *escuelas* as highly innovative and groundbreaking in academia. As such it is seen as replicable in other similar universities.

The Chilean honors experience might prove to be an avenue for bridging the gap between highly competitive universities (only three in the country) and the vast majority of higher educational institutions that deal with a socially and academically vulnerable population. By offering an alternative for excellence, the Honors Program contributes an opportunity for setting new teaching and learning standards in this context.

Of great importance has been the honors students' engagement in social and academic activities through which they express an emerging leadership in environmentally relevant topics such as animal rights, environmental protection for the surrounding nature sanctuary, and participation in diverse national and international seminars.

The accomplishments of the pilot phase of the UACH Honors Program are all the more notable for the fact that both faculty and students participated in the program without credit. Students did not receive academic credit for taking the three seminars. Faculty taught the courses without any reduction in their regular teaching load. This was necessary during the pilot phase, but is not sustainable in the long run.

Currently, the program aims for its consolidation at the university. In pursuing this goal, three major difficulties have been faced:

- i. To convince the administration of the value of programs such as the Honors Program as an important ingredient at the undergraduate level and more generally as a part of campus life. The recent evaluation survey showed that the Honors Program is not well known on the

university campus. The project's coordinators were not well enough aware of the importance of devising a strategy to involve the university administration. (The evaluator's visit proved crucial at this point.)

- ii. To convince the administration to invest in a program that appears not to produce immediate returns and that, seen from a different view, might be criticized for either dragging resources out of the *institutos* or for its elitist nature. It is thus important to demonstrate what the Honors Program can do for the university, namely:
 - Improve the quality of academic teaching
 - Attract better and more talented students
 - Project the work of the University as a regional and national leader on emerging issues.
- iii. To develop real honors practices among instructors. Indeed, good professors mistakenly believe that what best qualifies them is their ability to attract students' attention rather than to make the students the true actors of the process. The experiences and approaches developed in the Honors Program can be spread to the university's regular courses.
- iv. To raise class requirements among students. As a non-credit course, the Honors class was not seen by the students as a legitimate academic requirement. Thus the students' initial drive was satisfied by classes involving open discussions with few or any readings. Giving Honors courses regular credit recognized by the students' *careras* would both legitimize the program and stimulate active participation.

Such difficulties are counterbalanced by some of the program's achievements. In its first three years, the Honors Program has been able to establish itself as part of a commonsensical view of the university's activities. It has mobilized a great number of students, visitors, faculty, and community members. International students and outside researchers and faculty have spontaneously offered to join this venture.

If some of the crucial achievements of the Program ought to be underlined, the following are certain:

- i. The program showed that a transdisciplinary dialogue in the classroom was not only possible but that it stimulated the formation of new associations among students, faculty, and even the community.

- ii. It demonstrated the students' capabilities to push forward teamwork and to put forward their findings to their peers as well as to the larger community.
- iii. It explored new forms of partnership among the university and the local communities, stimulating a more horizontal relationship between them. It also integrated community activists both from local organizations and from the professional world as key players in the classroom.
- iv. The pilot project demonstrated that Honors is a real alternative for regional universities such as the Universidad Austral de Chile.

The program's next step will be an unusual experience of academic exchange with the Regional University of Blumenau in Santa Catarina, Brazil: a group of students, faculty and staff of the Universidad Austral de Chile and other invited staff of nearby universities will travel to Brazil to present the experiences of both the Honors Program and the Philosophy of Development seminar. This will be an encounter between the Chilean Honors Program and potential replicas both in Brazil and in Chile.

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The Fessenden Honors in Engineering Program

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Developing honors opportunities for students in engineering programs can be difficult, and the experience at the University of Pittsburgh is no exception. Often these students' degree requirements are so demanding that their opportunities for participating in honors experiences are severely limited. In each of the two semesters of their freshman year, freshman engineers at the University of Pittsburgh take the same courses: physics, chemistry, calculus, engineering computing, one elective, and a zero-credit, required engineering seminar that introduces them to their major choices. They enter their engineering majors in their sophomore year.

Our University Honors College (UHC) is organized on a participant model, not a membership one, so we have students who participate to varying degrees in the experiences that we offer such as honors coursework, special advising, intellectual community, and a special research-based Bachelor of Philosophy degree. For those engineering students interested in the opportunities of breadth and depth offered by the UHC, one option that provides a minimum of exposure is the choice of replacing some of their standard courses with honors versions. Honors courses are smaller and focused on in-depth treatment of course content. Math and science courses focus on deriving laws

and formulas from first principles before moving on to advanced problem-solving. Honors humanities and social science courses also feature in-depth treatment of material, often using primary texts instead of textbooks. Faculty who wish to teach in the Honors College submit course proposals that are reviewed and selected by our department. In general, students in honors courses expect to read, write, think, and discuss more than they would in a non-honors section. The primary benefit, then, is the knowledge and experience gained from working harder than one technically is required to work, in a vibrant classroom environment. Honors courses are not weighted differently than non-honors courses at our institution, so students not interested in the intrinsic benefits of these courses usually do not choose to take them.

On the other extreme, engineering students who wish to have a more well-rounded college experience have the option of adding the specific and elective requirements of a major in our liberal arts division, the School of Arts and Sciences. Usually this route results in so many extra credits that it requires a fifth year of study, so only the most intrepid students make this choice.

Finally, some engineering students seek a middle course. In order to achieve the goals of intellectual breadth and the experience of honors-level coursework, along with an intellectual community to support it, some students choose to participate in the Fessenden Honors in Engineering Program (FHEP).

Created in 1980, the program was originally named the Sophomore Honors in Engineering Program, reflecting the program's focus on activities through the second year of study. Since that time, the program has developed to focus more on the first and formative year of study. The program is named after Reginald Fessenden, an electrical engineer at the University of Pittsburgh (1893–1900) who carried out important early research that led to the development of the modern radio.

FHEP provides an opportunity for like-minded students to share challenging coursework and meet in a weekly seminar to discuss issues of philosophical and ethical import for engineers. Those who wish to receive a special certificate fulfill the following requirements:

- a 3.0 grade point average in related coursework;
- two out of three of their math, chemistry, and physics courses in honors versions each semester of their first year;
- the honors version of their engineering computing class both semesters;

- two honors social sciences/humanities electives, completed before the end of their second year; and
- FHEP Seminar (the honors version of Freshman Engineering Seminar) each semester of their freshman year.

In keeping with the UHC's participant model, not every student attempts (or is required to attempt) to fulfill the certificate requirements; roughly ten students do each year. Many other students pick and choose from several of the options listed above. Of these, almost all choose to participate in FHEP Seminar, which enrolls 25–40 students out of the roughly 420 engineering students that enter Pitt as traditional freshmen each year.

FHEP Seminar is the cornerstone of the program. Both the honors and the non-honors versions of Freshman Engineering Seminar have the goals of easing the transition to college and educating students, through small discussion groups, about the engineering majors available to them. Students in the honors version of the seminar cover this goal and go further by reading and discussing books with import for engineering and human culture. For example, they cover topics like the cultural division between the humanities and sciences described in C.P. Snow's *The Two Cultures*. They also argue about issues like technophobia and antitechnology, with readings by such mainstream authors as Neil Postman and fringe writers like the Unabomber (a full curriculum appears at the end of the article). The UHC provides the books free of charge to students in the seminar, thus covering the primary fixed cost of the program. Free-wheeling discussions are supplemented when possible by hikes, guest speakers, and field trips to locations such as Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater. All of these readings, discussions, and experiences are designed to give School of Engineering students a broader and deeper education, helping to create engineers who can think and write across the disciplines.

A seminar with such a wide-ranging topic list could easily degenerate into trying to be a Seminar in Everything. What holds it together is the preceptors—the sophomore- through senior-level students who run the program. Preceptors have all gone through FHEP Seminar as freshmen, and they use their experiences in the program (and in the School of Engineering) to facilitate discussions and dispense advice to freshmen. They meet regularly with a coordinator from the UHC to discuss organizational issues and facilitation techniques as well as constantly develop and revise the curriculum. Since there are non-honors versions of Freshman Engineering Seminar, the

preceptors and coordinator work with the School of Engineering to make sure the seminar sections run in parallel to each other. Even so, the preceptors are given a great deal of leeway in how they administer the course. New preceptors are recruited out of each year's class by an interviewing committee consisting of preceptors, the coordinator, and a representative from the School of Engineering when possible.

At the end of each semester, anonymous course evaluations are conducted in FHEP Seminar. The compilation of these evaluations provides information on many student issues, such as satisfaction with the course, appraisal of readings, appreciation of humanistic issues, satisfaction with their preparation for spring major selection, and evaluation of the preceptors' work.

The preceptors are volunteers; in fact, ours have repeatedly turned down offers to be paid for their work. They seem to feel that being volunteers gives them extra degrees of responsibility and autonomy. However, they still report to the UHC coordinator, who works with them closely. The more significant explanation for this volunteer attitude seems to be the way that they have adopted and hope to embody the UHC philosophy, which they advance in their seminar: one should do extra intellectual work for the intrinsic benefit of knowledge as well as for the exciting intellectual community that forms in a group of people who share that value.

By now, hundreds of currently working engineers have experienced FHEP as undergraduates. FHEP has met its goal of giving undergraduate engineering students the chance to participate in the UHC, the chance to get together with a group of like-minded future engineers to discuss philosophy, engineering ethics, and cultural issues, all while still progressing toward a professional degree. Some students do more, such as those who go on to earn double degrees. However, for those students interested in the middle course, FHEP is meeting the needs of motivated, curious, able, and intelligent students—students interested in bridging the Two Cultures.

FHEP READING LIST

Semester 1: Engineering and You

1. Isaac Asimov, *Robot Dreams*
2. Samuel Florman, *The Civilized Engineer*
3. C. P. Snow, *The Two Cultures*

4. Eugene Ferguson, *Engineering and the Mind's Eye*
5. Robert Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*

Semester 2: Engineering and the World

1. Richard Feynman, *What Do You Care What Other People Think?*
2. Henry Petroski, *To Engineer is Human*
3. William McDonough & Michael Braungart, *Cradle to Cradle*
4. William A. Henry, *In Defense of Elitism*
5. Neil Postman, *Technopoly*
6. Ted Kaczynski, *The Unabomber Manifesto*

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Majoring in the Minor: A Closer Look at Experiential Learning

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(This essay is a somewhat revised version of a plenary address that Bernice Braid delivered at the annual meeting of the North Carolina Honors Association, hosted by Fayetteville State University, September 28–29, 2007.)

Experiential learning is, for me, a preeminent means to accomplish goals that are fundamental to the entire educational enterprise. It is a set of strategies that structure acquisition of information, analysis of ideas, and self-reflection in order to pull people into active engagement with their world. Among these strategies are skills of observation and interpretation that require learners to take careful note and to examine themselves as processors of the details they themselves assemble into meaningful patterns, thus generating the insight, over and over again, that it is they who create the meaning they come to attach to events and to human interchange. The greater their awareness of what it is they are doing, the likelier it is that the meanings they create will confer on them the edge it takes to move forward with strength and to be part of a world they really want to be part of. In some sense, then,

these strategies help students to be actors, not objects of everyone else's acting on them. Students often say that one or another immersion experience has "transformed" them. We as educators often call this metamorphosis "empowerment."

A quotation of Marcel Proust that has been increasingly cited during this past decade (heavily by travel companies, which is ironic) is one I used some years ago when colleagues and I published the NCHC monograph *Place as Text* about experiential learning. Proust said, "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes." The challenge of undertaking activities that might produce and develop those new eyes has been the work of my own professional life for more than thirty years. From that work I want to pull out a few principles for us to consider.

American higher education has for more than a century considered field experience a prime vehicle for what was initially called "broadening horizons." Study abroad was an early expression of this thrust, though it was generally practiced only in elite settings where students could afford to travel to distant countries. For most of the time I am referring to here, this travel took the shape of groups in guided tours and classes that looked very much like the ones they took at home, though perhaps taught in a language other than English. Outside class there were museums, cafés, rambles, to be sure. But the norm remained "acquisition" or "collecting impressions" as a means to broaden those horizons. The emphasis was less on seeing differently than on seeing more.

By the 1990s a totally new kind of foreign study emerged with projects like the Peace Corps. Students in those programs lived and worked with foreign populations, usually those at economic levels far below what they were familiar with, eating odd food and sleeping in strange beds—or hammocks—in dark rooms. By and large the veterans of the Peace Corps I have known returned home with more knowledge, but also with different ways of seeing and a radically altered sense of what matters in human life. Extrapolating from the existential results of these kinds of immersion experiences, other projects took shape: VISTA, in which foreign territory in underserved urban areas or poor rural areas could be just another part of town, or another American town or farm community, where participants helped children learn to read, helped to build schools, introduced the printed word into the lives of entire populations. Most recently CityCorps, Teach for America, Jumpstart, and others have evolved, projects through which college students give one or more years transferring some of their learning to the daily life of those who have yet to

learn and who thus might acquire skills that permit full participation in the economic and social life of their towns, cities, and country.

There has always been, in America and in many Western countries, the expectation that another kind of immersion is expected of anyone who wants to learn about science. Both field investigation outside the classroom and laboratory experience as part of science courses—expensive to equip and implement—have been staples of high school and college curricula, even for students not intending to become laboratory scientists. These are forms of experiential learning, though often even in these domains the experience itself has been attenuated: students have been expected to replicate experiments already documented, to verify in the field what scholars have already published and the students have already read in advance of taking to those fields and labs. The anomaly of using “canned experiments” in the context of disciplines of discovery has been the subject of both anguish and critical attention in higher education since the 1980s, and many changes have been initiated in scientific pedagogy to correct procedures that prevent understanding, excitement, and empowerment from occurring among students of science.

A final class of hands-on experience has for a couple of decades been increasingly evident in college curricula, namely workplace and what some call “real world” experience. These are marketed not so much to “broaden horizons” as to make students “more competitive.” Placements with a social service component are seen as opportunities to “give back” and as occasions to be socially responsible. Internships, volunteer commitments, and even sometimes salaried positions used as laboratories are formal components of courses that ask students to examine connections, and disconnections, between theory and practice in the far less predictable environment of businesses, social organizations, and community programs. Presumably students acquire from this juxtaposition skills of concrete application that express or correct theory they have learned in class. But in these instances there too often is no apparatus for observation, analysis, self-reflection; no formal mechanism to promote understanding of the ramifications of experience in those practical laboratories that might **not** bear out the conclusions of theories studied on campus.

A great deal can be gained from all of the activities I have outlined here, even if they are undertaken and carried out in ways that might fall short of provoking change and deep understanding. It should be clear that I lean in the direction of constructing all laboratories as genuine experimental stations to foster consciousness of purpose and method, where students take on

the responsibility of keeping accurate lab books, noting sequences of events and who is involved in them, naming (which often means creating a personal vocabulary to describe what they think they see) the elements of what they witness, analyzing their own characterization of what they see so that, like good scientists, they can ask themselves what evidence they have provided in their lab books to support whatever analytical conclusions they have come to. Finally I want to see in those books some evidence that students have sought to identify—in the way they themselves behaved or proceeded, or in what they reported as having seen—what led them to see and record things in the way they did.

Such lab books are a means of examining not only the objects/events/interactions seen but also the eyes that looked and the sensibility that reported on what was seen. This is self-reflection—not comfort-making, maybe, but essential. Looking, in other words, is only a first step. It's an important one. Noting is a second. Both together are a preliminary exercise that my colleagues and I who practice City as Text™ strategies call “mapping.” The full activity is a manifestation of observation exercises that is required for all the steps that follow from this preliminary mapping. The description, interpretation, and analysis that must come after this make possible the journey to understanding. And it is these next steps that are most often missing from what higher education has been able to mount as “experiential learning.”

My argument here is that seeing, even from the viewpoint of each of several disciplines, cannot produce understanding unless an act of synthesis—of integrating disparate and sometimes contradictory information—has taken place. If in a social science class students first examine the thinking of particular scholars, who structure their analytical findings in particular frameworks, and then move out to the streets or offices to observe activities that do not conform to theory, what are they asked to do with the disparities they think they have seen? What encourages them to examine their own way of looking to see if it has produced what they think they have witnessed? The best scientists must employ these self-reflective skills all the time, though even they can occasionally be faulted for overlooking evidence that does not confirm their hypotheses. But I argue that all of us need to practice such self-reflection if we are ever to develop the “new eyes” Proust talks about.

A stunning example of the phenomenon I refer to here is the case of William Whyte's investigation of the city that he ultimately published in a monumental work called, simply, *City*. He not only came out of a generation of social scientists who had concluded that people, if given half a chance,

would avoid to their death the pressure of crowds and other people, but he himself shaped that generation and created that framework in his earlier theoretical research. Based on his conclusions, popular in the second half of the twentieth century, whole schools of urban planning, indeed whole neighborhood reconstruction efforts, evolved. Houses were torn down to make room for highways that bifurcated neighborhoods and then ended up destroying them. The planners and politicians were not sure why. Idiosyncratic and visionary thinkers like Jane Jacobs came along. For a couple of decades few took her seriously, though now she seems to have become The Urban Philosopher for a new century. She argued that people feel safer with lots of other folks around, that they seek out the presence of many—even too many—others. And her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* was prophetic in that she sought to convince us all that cities work when they feel like extensions of our living room: full of objects, other people, with a constant hum, perpetual motion and exchange of energies.

Whyte, who had begun in the older school of sociology in which less is more (give them separate parks and they will play, take away all traffic and they will thrive) heard Jacobs. He undertook a long-term study with graduate students at Columbia University as his assistants. For years they broke into small teams and pursued the exact kind of mapping exercises we have been using in NCHC City as Text™ exercises since 1976. What they mapped were specific areas of the built environment in New York City: the densely populated neighborhoods in Spanish Harlem, the chic business zones along Park Avenue. After many years and thousands of feet of film showing children at play and office personnel at lunch, they concluded something that surprised Whyte himself: kids congregate where there are other kids—that is, on their neighborhood streets—and play there. Even if their homemade baseball game, using a stick and a ball, interrupts the flow of traffic and threatens their lives, they prefer to play right there on their own streets (especially at intersections where traffic flow is the heaviest) than to retreat to a park unless the park itself is stuffed with others playing pick-up games.

And on the plazas outside expensive office buildings, people crowd to eat their picnic lunches—if there are others battling to find a perch in some tiny space where there are too few spots on the wall for all who want to hang out at lunch time. People rush into park areas where chairs can be moved to create new conversation clusters—something the French have known since their Revolution—rather than to “recreation areas” designed to provide ample space between bodies and keep people away from one another. They

even stop one another for a chat exactly at crowded intersections, where they block traffic and where conversation is difficult, but they stay there precisely to block and to chat.

Whyte's results were incontrovertible and, to him, shocking. He saw that to interpret his own data without fudging he needed, in effect, to scuttle a lot of his earlier decades of research and to construct an entirely new way of talking about urban space and urban renewal. He went on to include in the final publication additional observations about many places other than New York, but the impact of his extensive work where I live, in NYC, has been profound. No new tiny urban park is built without bunches of moveable chairs. There are now ordinances in place that provide "give backs" to developers such that they can build higher only if they provide public spaces where hundreds of workers can crowd to fight for sitting spots on the parapets of the plazas that provide a kind of apron in front of monolithic office buildings. Since I moved to New York it has changed remarkably and become usable and inviting in ways no one thought could happen in such a densely populated metropolitan area.

The point for me in this example is that Whyte began, very late in a well-published scholarly career, with the simple and in some ways primitive first steps that all experiential education needs to use. I know we all grow up with the admonition to "learn from experience," but we all know, probably by the time we are teenagers, that not many people do in fact learn from experience. Bigots are not bigoted because they have had a lot of experience with those they hate and want to exclude, but because no amount of experience or religious training has been able yet to dislodge from their closed minds the way they prefer to see the world. They are stuck, and cannot grow "new eyes." This behavior is extreme, though in today's world unfortunately not rare, but it exemplifies the worst effects of not being able to see old things in new ways, or maybe to see new things at all.

Why should this kind of experiential learning be a part of all education? Precisely because it helps explorers discover, it helps them develop a sense of agency, it accomplishes something advocated so eloquently by Parker Palmer: it helps students to "intersect their biography with that of the world." What we seek, all of us, are ways to reintegrate our thinking so that it does not divide us into "us and them" but instead connects us as participant observers in the same small world. We want an inventory of ways to create coherence. Out of the exclusionary cubbyholes that our disciplines appear to occupy because of how our institutions organize themselves administratively; out of the chaos

that our world presents to us in embattled countries everywhere; out of the received knowledge that shifts and changes even as we acquire it for the first time, we must arrive at modes of thinking that help us make some sense out of conflicting viewpoints and that embolden us with an organizing principle for all the disorganized information out there.

There's another reason to bother with active learning. There's a new NCHC monograph coming out soon called *Shatter the Glassy Stare: Implementing Experiential Learning in Higher Education*. As you can guess from this title, the authors refer to a perception captured only from the front of the room. The "glassy stare" phenomenon is commonplace in the academy. Students bow their heads to take notes, lift faces bravely, and too often gaze with a glazed look at the speaker. It's a phenomenon common in tour groups, seen from where the tour leader stands to tell his tale. All of us who experiment with experiential learning do so for the effect it has on deep understanding and transformative behaviors, but we also do it for the more immediate, maybe frankly selfish reason that we want desperately to shatter the glassy stare.

In *Place as Text* I wrote about mapping, analysis, and self-reflection, and I concluded that "The process turns on making maps: newcomers need to chart a passage. When explorers see themselves charting their own routes, they come to see themselves as natives in a new land. They come, in fact, to feel that they have developed new eyes."

Today I will add that explorers who see themselves as natives in a new land are engaged. In their innermost being they are involved and understand that everywhere they go, even to books they have read before or hometowns they thought they wanted to escape, they have what it takes to see more than they did before and to feel the power of being able to create their own new pathways in any setting.

This is not to say that field experience, service learning, or structured explorations should replace all other pedagogy. Quite the contrary. I would argue that it can enhance all other forms of teaching and learning by making all of it a "text" to be read, that is mapped, interpreted, analyzed, and understood reflectively. Lectures, though often too full of information for which students are not prepared, are important. They come at the wrong time. They should come after the reading, discussing, exploring. Sustained research is fundamental in higher education but could benefit from experience-based active learning, from conscious and active inquiry, as a prelude to scholarly inquiry.

Because people learn in many different ways, and because the mere accumulation of data, facts, and other people's ideas does not constitute knowledge, whatever pedagogy helps students to understand what they read, perceive how they think, organize what they hear, and see what they look at should be part of a much larger whole that allows people to incorporate multiple lenses and multiple modes into their ways of knowing at every level. To be able to make this case has been important to me, and even more important has been the opportunity to see it flourish in the minds and lives of students and teachers over the past four decades.

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Ending in Honors

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(What follows is a slightly revised version of a presentation given by Sam Schuman at the 2008 NCHC conference in San Antonio, Texas.)

I'll be wise hereafter, and seek for grace.

—Caliban, *The Tempest*

PART ONE

Sometime in the year after the 1983 NCHC national conference in Philadelphia, I had a gripe. A younger and less circumspect professor in those halcyon days of a quarter-century ago, I was not hesitant to express it: Why, I wondered irritated and irritatingly, doesn't an organization like this one do a better job of welcoming and orienting newcomers to Honors? I thought at the time that the NCHC had a tendency to drift toward being an "old boy's club," where neophytes often felt baffled and uncomfortable, marginalized and patronized. (I had been attending the meeting for eleven years at that point and still felt "out of it" most of the time.) Grumble, grumble, grumble. At that point in our collective history, one of the presiding elders of our

organization was Dr. John Portz. I have always admired John and seen in him the quintessence of much of what is best about the honors movement. He was bright, creative, funny, humane, unpredictable, endlessly inquisitive. We shall not look upon his like again. When John heard my complaint about our collective inability to bring new people into the honors movement and into NCHC and, in fact, into our annual conference, he responded, in fairly typical John Portz fashion, “why don’t you do something about it?” I was, of course, somewhat startled by the unique notion, at least in academe, that instead of griping about something, I should try to fix it. And thus was born at the 1984 conference in Memphis “Beginning in Honors.”

Next year will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of that launch, and I hope we’ll mark that modest anniversary: “Beginning in Honors” has probably served—and served pretty well, I suspect—several thousand of us and our colleagues over these years. I organized the first several sessions and then was joined as co-director by Anne Ponder (with whom I still collaborate professionally); for the last many years, the workshop has benefitted enormously from the skilled leadership of my old friend in honors Ted Estess. “Beginning in Honors” has spawned children: the *Beginning in Honors Handbook*, “Developing in Honors,” and the like. Today I want to share with you—and then invite us all to share with each other—some thoughts about the other end of the honors career: the ending.

My comments are in four parts: where folks go when they leave honors; how to know when to leave honors; how to end the honors career; and whether there is an honors afterlife. Since I’ve also been a chief academic officer and, twice, a campus chancellor, my remarks are easily generalized. I could well be talking about ending a deanship or a college presidency or any other position of senior administrative responsibility at a college or university.

PART TWO

Where do we go when we leave our work as honors directors or deans? (Aside: I’m going to drift back and forth between honors director and honors dean; honors program and honors college; by and large, for our purposes today, assume I’m speaking of both.) A careful statistical analysis of this question might be an interesting bit of research for someone looking for a topic in higher education administration. Anecdotally and far less scientifically, I’ve seen people go in several directions.

- Some honors directors or deans go (you should pardon the expression) up. They ascend into the ether (or descend into the pit, depending upon your perspective) of more senior administrative positions. Although the more common career path is probably from department chair to dean (and thence to provost and president), lots of chief honors officers have stepped on to this path. And it is a good one to follow. I recall the then-director of the ACE administrative interns program suggesting that honors leadership is an excellent stepping stone to other managerial positions in academia. Honors directors generally do pretty much what other academic administrators do: make and keep track of budgets; hire, counsel, and review teachers; organize schedules; put out fires; oversee academic facilities (often too small and decrepit); provide oversight of the curriculum; and the like. But honors administrators tend to do those tasks on a smaller, and usually far less visible (hence less risky) scale. (I recall an aphorism of Grey Austin, another old-time NCHC leader I admire. Grey said that being an honors director is like being a small boy who wets his pants: it gives you a nice, warm feeling, and you hope nobody notices.) Being a college or university dean, provost, or president is an interesting and rewarding job: it's been good to me, and with all the tribulations that accompany such posts, I'd still recommend it. Being an honors director is probably more fun, and it does have the added advantage of being closer to students and of generally being viewed by faculty colleagues as not having gone over to the dark side—at least not quite yet. I should add that, not infrequently, a move into a higher administrative echelon brings with it a rather considerable salary boost; sometimes this is even a motivating factor.
- Some people work in honors administration for a year or for a decade or more and then return happily to the classroom, library, and lab where they began. This, too, is a fine career path. Honors administration is still fairly close to the faculty professional culture, and many people are willing to go this far but no further in administration. In this respect, the honors directorship probably resembles the department chairpersonship in that quite often chairs serve their term and then cheerfully rotate back to a professorial role. Often, happily, former honors administrators become current honors teachers.

- And, of course, there are some people (not a whole lot, but more than a couple, I believe) who become honors administrators and stay in that position until they retire or expire. This past year, we lost an old friend, John Grady, who died with his honors boots on. More happily, I think Ada Long went directly from the directorship at UAB to retirement.

So, some people leave honors when they leave academe, some leave to move to higher administrative posts, some leave to move back UP to the professorial life.

PART THREE

When is the right time to end in honors—or, for that matter, in any position in academic administration, or perhaps even in any job?

The quickest and simplest answer, and probably the best one, is: whenever something else sounds better. Oh, sure, we all have fantasies at times. I recall speculating at some point about the possibility of becoming a professional canoe builder and leaving the academic world. But there is a difference, and we all probably can recognize it, between such a fantasy and a genuine and persistent desire to do something else. Maybe the “something else” is something in academe—teaching or deaning. Maybe it is (like Monty Python) something completely different: leading bicycle tours of Tuscany, becoming a lawyer, custom-crafting handmade furniture, launching an entrepreneurial new business in Shanghai, whatever. The older I get, the more forcefully it dawns on me that this lifetime is IT, at least as lifetimes on Earth go, and if we have the luxury and freedom to do so, we should spend as much of it as possible doing what we really want to do.

In rather less grandiose and theological terms, there are some other pretty easy tests of whether or not it is time to end an appointment in academic administration. For example, it is time to move on when it is becoming increasingly difficult to muster genuine and deep feelings for situations which you have seen over and over already. This tends to happen to most of us over time. I knew it was time to consider ceasing to be a chancellor, for example, when I started to find it hard to become too deeply upset over the annual spring racial incident on our campus: as sure as the snow finally melted in Minnesota, some idiot would scrawl a racist phrase on a poster or deface a sign of a multicultural organization or be heard to say something offensive and stupid. These are terrible things, but after you’ve been through them a couple dozen times, they lose their ability to shock. How many times can an honors

dean lose sleep over a student who waited too long to start his senior thesis and now realizes, ten days before it is due, that he's not going to make it and to whom this crisis seems like the end of the world? If your response to that crisis is becoming a barely suppressed yawn, maybe you need to stop being an honors dean? After all, to that irresponsible student, it really does seem like the end of the world; to those minority students offended by the racist graffiti, this is really a big deal. I'm not suggesting that a persistent, highly elevated level of stress is an indication of job satisfaction. But I am suggesting that, if you don't occasionally get a jolt out of your work, it may be time to find a new job. If most everything that comes up seems to have come up before, maybe it is time to put yourself in a place where something new comes up.

It is also the case that, as we get a year older every year, and our students don't, the distance between us and them gets bigger and bigger. Some of us figure out how to adjust and compensate and overcome that growing gap; others are, finally, defeated by it. I know some academics in their 70s who are still obviously entranced by folks in the 18–21-year-old range; I know others who are not.

Sometimes—not as infrequently as I would wish—we leave jobs as honors administrators because we've been asked to by someone above us in the administrative chain of command. I've known very few people who have spent a career as academic administrators and haven't had at least one job end badly. It's a devastating experience, but it is also one from which complete recovery is the usual prognosis: I speak from personal experience here. I think honors administrators are particularly vulnerable because so often institutions or senior administrators develop (sometimes overnight) some rather startling and unrealistic expectations of what an honors program can and should do—e.g., raise the SAT scores of the entering first-year class dramatically.

Finally, and somewhat idiosyncratically I fear, I think it is time to leave a job when you start to think that all you have to do is hold that job for a few more years, and then you can leave. We have all seen people in our business who are just hanging on, and I can understand and sympathize with those folks, but our business is just too important to be anybody's placekeeper. Our students only get one, very short, baccalaureate honors career, and we are robbing them of an extraordinary and unique experience if during their eight (or ten) semesters, we're waiting for something else to happen.

So, with the range of possibilities outlined before you, know when it is time to end a career in honors administration, and follow one of those other pathways. Don't go prematurely, but don't hang on too long, either.

PART FOUR

It is always tricky to figure out how best to go about leaving an academic administrative job such as honors director or dean.

Assuming you have a choice, how much time should you give the institution to replace you, for example? The actual duration probably varies somewhat from position to position, institution to institution. As a general rule, it is responsible to announce your departure with enough time to comfortably find a replacement but not so far in advance as to create a long, drawn-out lame duckship. A really long administrative twilight is painful for the administrator and dysfunctional for the institution: nobody really knows who's in charge, including the person in charge. I've watched a couple of two-year intervals between the announcement of a departure and the actual departure, and it has never been a pretty thing to see. I think that for most honors leadership positions, it is probably about right to tell the individual to whom you report that you plan to leave at the beginning of your projected last academic year—in, say, August or September if you are planning a May or June stepping down. After consulting with that supervisor, you would probably be wise not to wait too much longer to tell the faculty, staff, and students with whom you work of your plans. I think it is a little abrupt to make such an announcement at the beginning of the semester that will be your last; a bit protracted to communicate your intentions a whole calendar year in advance.

When you tell folks you're going, what do you say?—within reasonable bounds of diplomacy and discretion, the truth. If you are ending in honors to move to something else, say so; say it's been great, but it is time for a new challenge. If you're leaving because someone asked you to, say that there are different visions of the future for honors at your school, and your boss has a different vision than yours. If the truth is painful, it won't get easier; if it is good news, share it. If it is just time, explain that to your colleagues, friends and students: it's a teachable moment—it's good for folks to understand that life has cycles and that they can be embraced with grace.

When an academic administrator steps down, remains at the same institution, and is replaced, what kind of relationship do you cultivate with your replacement? This can be a tricky matter. To some extent, of course, it depends on what that person desires. It is a good idea to meet that new person and make it clear that you are open to cooperating or collaborating in whatever manner, including no manner, she would find most helpful.

Inevitably, in such a situation, you will hear some complaints about the new dean or director. They may be a bit gratifying to hear, to tell the truth.

You hope they look bad because you were so good! The nobler course is to urge patience and understanding, to suggest ways to help, not to magnify dissatisfaction about your successor, and never to try to create it.

What do you do if your replacement really does seem to be doing a terrible job? I'm not sure. In some situations, I think maybe the only thing to do is keep your mouth shut and let things work themselves out. In more situations, though, it is probably best, at some point, to have a chat with that person and lay out honestly and kindly what you are perceiving as the problems. Very very rarely, but sometimes, it might make sense, after speaking to the individual directly, to express your concerns to his or her supervisor, but I'd sure see that as a rather desperate last resort, perhaps only to be tried when you sincerely believe students are being deprived or the program is in mortal jeopardy.

In most other, happier, circumstances, though, offer to help, but then wait until your assistance is sought; don't push yourself, your experience, your expertise on your replacement. Don't hover, don't criticize, don't second-guess: be available and supportive. This is not always easy. If you care for your program, your students, your institution, it is important to do it right.

A brief anecdote might also be relevant here. A retiring college president gave her successor a package containing three numbered envelopes. "If you ever get in any trouble, and you probably will, just open these and follow the instructions," she said. Not too long thereafter, the new chief executive made her first mistake. She opened envelope #1 and read: "Just tell them that you are new on the job, are still learning your way around, and a few early miss-steps are probably inevitable." It worked. Later in the year, she made a second error in judgment, and quickly turned to the second set of instructions. She found this advice: "Say that everyone makes some mistakes, and you acknowledge you've made one in this matter, and you're sorry, and it won't happen again." Once more, the advice worked. But not too much later, a third serious problem arose. The president reached for the third envelope, ripped it open in haste, and read: "Go to the bookstore, and get three envelopes. . . ."

PART FIVE

Many academics have made, and are continuing to make, important contributions to the honors movement after ending their term as honors administrators on their own campuses. Just because one ceases to be an honors director or dean does not mean one ceases to be interested in honors or becomes incapable of doing valuable work therein. I want to end my

comments by suggesting just a few of the ways in which an ending in honors doesn't actually have to be the end in honors.

One option is to write for honors. Our publications are always looking for good articles, and our NCHC Publications Board is continually developing new and revised honors monographs. If you have mulled your honors experiences and find you have something to say, write it down: the odds are it will be useful to others.

Not only can a retired honors director write for honors colleagues, but it is possible and desirable to write about honors, for the non-honors audience. One of the perennial complaints we make is that others in academe don't know about us or don't understand what we do and how valuable we are. To revisit a theme of my opening paragraphs, we should spend less time complaining about this marginalization and more time doing something about it, and one of the best ways is by telling some worthwhile or interesting part of our story to a larger audience.

Of course, such communication doesn't have to be written. Former honors directors often give presentations at regional or national honors meetings, serve on panels, chair sessions, etc. At recent NCHC conferences, for example, past presidents of NCHC have been invited to convene sessions featuring student research presentations.

Former honors administrators should think about the desirability of taking the NCHC training and certification for site evaluators and doing some honors consulting. In some respects, the past honors director is a better, more objective, and potentially more helpful site evaluator than the current director, since that retiree no longer has a program of her own to serve as a template for someone else's. The worst site visitors or consultants are those who go with a preconceived image of what honors programs or colleges should be, and too often that image is a reflection of their own program. The best are those who visit with an open mind and seek to discover the right program for the particular institution they are helping, not to impose on it their own; if you don't have one of your own, this is much easier.

Similarly, honors leaders who have ended their term of administrative service at their home institutions make excellent leaders for programs like "Beginning in Honors" or "Developing in Honors" at the national and regional meetings. This is a great way to support those who are following you, to stay engaged in honors issues, and to put your experience and expertise to productive use.

Other NCHC endeavors can often use that experience and expertise, too: Partners in the Parks, Honors Semesters, Faculty Institutes, and the like. If the honors director who has moved on from daily honors administration has an impulse to stay involved in the honors movement, and most of us do, there is no end of satisfying, genuinely helpful and meritorious ways to do so.

In *Macbeth*, Malcolm says of the executed Cawdor, “Nothing in his life / Became him like the leaving of it” (I. iv. 278). Ending an administrative career, or an important phase of an administrative career, in honors or in anything else is certainly not a beheading, but it is a kind of loss. Like that fictional thane, let’s leave it well.

Becoming Part of a Story

TED L. ESTESS

University of Houston

[What follows is a slightly revised version of a story that Ted Estess read at the ceremony honoring his retirement after thirty-one years from the position of Dean of the Honors College at the University of Houston. The story, as he explained to those assembled, was written some years ago in Colorado, where he spent time most summers with his wife, Sybil, and his son, Barrett.]

I

Late in the day my thirteen-year-old son Barrett and I row down to the deep water at the end of Sun Valley Lake. He wants to try a new lure called a *Mepps*. To his amazement, the *Mepps* no more than touches the water when a big Rainbow hits it.

We move around the lake for a couple more hours and Barrett tosses that *Mepps* out another two hundred times, but he never gets another strike. He is puzzled. How is it that he catches a trout on the first cast and never touches another the rest of the day?

To a considerable extent, it is a fortuitous matter, this catching a fish. The task of the fisherman is limited merely to doing what he can to encourage good fortune to come his way. At a bare minimum, he doesn't want to get in the way.

All this reminds me of the series of events that led me to being hooked by the University of Houston several decades ago. It began when my phone rang in March of 1976 in Missoula, Montana, where I was visiting professor at the university there. The voice said, "This is Donald Lutz from the University of Houston." I had never heard of Lutz, never thought of the University of Houston.

"I'm calling to invite you to be a consultant for us. Gerald Hinkle recommended you."

I started to ask, "What's a consultant?" And I didn't tell Lutz I wouldn't have known Gerald Hinkle if he walked in the door.

Later, I recalled that I had met Hinkle at a meeting of the National Collegiate Honors Council in October of 1973 in Williamsburg, Virginia. Hinkle, Sam Schuman—who is my distinguished and long-time friend in honors education—and I ended up going out to dinner together. I wanted to try the peanut soup at Aunt Sally's Tavern.

I've met lots of people at lots of meetings, but this one time in Virginia I meet Hinkle. The following year Hinkle meets Lutz at an honors meeting in Arkansas; and then over a year after that Lutz calls me in Montana, thereby setting in motion a series of events that led to Sybil's and my moving to Texas in January of 1977. My intersecting Hinkle in Virginia and then his intersecting Lutz in Arkansas were at least as improbable as the first cast of Barrett's Mepps landing right on top of that trout in the deep water of Sun Valley Lake.

Had I decided to eat a hamburger alone instead of going with Hinkle for some of that god-awful peanut soup at Aunt Sally's Tavern, my life in Houston, Texas, never would have happened. Thirty-one years of life in Houston would have been . . . well, it would have been nothing. Not a thing.

Now somebody might say, "That's just the way life is, Estess. What's the big deal?"

Well, to Estess, it *is* a big deal. It's my life I'm talking about, and I don't like thinking that my life, *as I have lived it*, might never have been. If it might never have been, it somehow seems flimsy, shadowy, inconsequential. I've heard that song about life being but a vapor in mid-summer's day and all that, but somehow I want *my* life to be more substantial, more solid. If it's not, the game doesn't seem worth the candle, and why do I spend so much time thinking about it?

A book arrived in yesterday's mail, a gift from my friend John Smith. The inscription says: "Ted & Barrett, drop everything & read this book." I tend to do what friends tell me to do, so last night I started reading *All the Pretty Horses* by Cormac McCarthy. I came quickly to like John Grady Cole and Lacey Rawlins, two young cowboys living around San Angelo, Texas. One night John Grady and Rawlins lie down in the middle of a blacktop road to watch the stars:

Rawlins propped the heel of one boot atop the top of the other. As if to pace off the heavens. My daddy run off from home when he was fifteen. Otherwise I'd been born in Alabama.

You wouldnt of been born at all.

What makes you say that?

Cause your mama's from San Angelo and he never would of met her.

He'd of met somebody.

So would she.

So?

So you wouldnt of been born.

I dont see why you say that. I'd of been born somewheres.

How?

Well why not?

If your mama had a baby with her other husband and your daddy had one with his other wife which one would you be?

I wouldnt be neither one of em.

That's right.

Rawlins lay watching the stars. After a while he said: I could still be born. I might look different or somethin. If God wanted me to be born I'd been born.

And if He didnt you wouldnt.

You're makin my goddamn head hurt.

Some years ago, I made my goddamn head hurt trying to get through Jean Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*. Like most folks who tried, I never made it, but I read enough to catch the drift. Sartre uses the French phrase *de trop* to capture something of what John Grady Cole is talking about. An occurrence—like Lacey Rawlins' getting born in Texas—is *de trop* if it has this accidental, fortuitous quality about it. *Contingent* is another word philosophers use to talk about the same thing. An occurrence is contingent if it may just as well have happened as not.

An occurrence—indeed, a life—that depends so thoroughly on the unlikely intersection of Estess and Hinkle at an honors meeting in Virginia and on the subsequent intersection of Hinkle and Lutz at another honors meeting in Arkansas is thoroughly contingent. It is *de trop*. Thinking about that makes my goddamn head hurt.

Now some folks are different from me. When they see how chancy life is, they're ready to have a go at it. They enjoy taking chances as long as they have a chance to take chances.

Others are like Jean Paul Sartre. They bravely face up to the contingency and even to the absurdity of their choices such as my choice to try the peanut soup at Aunt Sally's Tavern.

But for the life of me, I've never been able to respond like that, and I tell you why: I wasn't reared that way. It's in the rearing, that's what it is.

Now philosophers may scoff at this, but it's the only refutation—if I may use the word—to Sartre I've ever come up with. When he says that my life is thoroughly contingent, he implies that my life is as insubstantial as vapor floating off a lake. Again, against such a view, I have to say: I wasn't reared that way.

But I have to confess that my life felt mighty vaporous, mighty *de troppyy* in the months after I moved to Texas to direct the nigh-moribund University of Houston Honors Program. I felt that I might as well be—or not be—somewhere else. It was as though I was somewhere I wasn't supposed to be, living a life I wasn't supposed to be living.

"That's why," I said to Michael one day, "I feel so bad." Michael was a therapist-friend who helped me quite a bit during those first months in Texas.

"What's why?" Michael asked.

"Why I feel so bad moving to Houston."

"Last week you told me you didn't think you would ever figure out why you feel so bad, and here you are this week still trying to figure it out."

"That was last week," I said.

“Well?”

“I feel bad because it’s all an accident, my even being in Houston, Texas, directing an honors program that really doesn’t exist. It might just as well not have happened. None of it.”

“That’s curious,” he said, and then he started laughing. I don’t know why, but his laughing got me to giggling, too. Before I had a chance to say anything else, Michael said, “Our time is up for today. But, Ted, there’s another possibility.”

“What’s that?” I asked.

“Instead of feeling bad you could feel good.”

I said, “I doubt it.”

II

Out here in Colorado this summer I’ve taken to rereading some old books. This week I’m rereading Norman Maclean’s *A River Runs Through It*. I know it’s only a coincidence, but my friend John Smith sent this book to me fifteen years ago, and here this week he sends me another, the one by McCarthy. Talking about growing up in Missoula, Montana, Norman Maclean writes:

By the middle of that summer when I was seventeen I had yet to see myself become part of a story. I had as yet no notion that life every now and then becomes literature—not for long, of course, but long enough to be what we best remember, and often enough so that what we eventually come to mean by life are those moments when life, instead of going sideways, backwards, forward, or nowhere at all, lines out straight, tense and inevitable, with a complication, climax, and, given some luck, a purgation, as if life had been made and not [just] happened.

To tell the truth, that’s the way I was reared to think of life. The Baptists did it to me. Good-hearted preachers and widow women told me that Good God Almighty had nothing better to do than make a plan for my life. I thus came to expect my life to line out “straight, tense and inevitable” and for all the parts of it to go together like parts of a well-made story.

At the same time, other good folks were saying, “Young man, you are an American: you can do anything you want to do, be anything you want to be.” In other words, I was free to make up my life any old way I wanted to. But while I was trying to make it up, it felt like my life was going “sideways, backwards, forwards, or nowhere at all.”

Now this is a strange, even contradictory situation for a young man to be in: to be hearing, on the one hand, that somehow your life is planned even before you begin living it and, on the other, that your life is up for grabs. The first places you before one great Necessity; the other places you before an infinite number of possibilities.

To some extent what the Baptists said about life made me feel pretty good. After all, it was rather invigorating to think that Good God Almighty had a plan for little old Teddy Estess way down there in Tylertown, Mississippi. That view made things pretty simple: all you have to do is figure out the plan and get on it. But if you don't, you are, as we say, up a creek without a paddle.

The problem, of course, arose in the middle of life when I saw that something so momentous as moving to the fair city of Houston, Texas, and taking on a leadership role in honors at the University of Houston turned on so fragile a matter as a cup of peanut soup. I didn't seem to be living a life that had been made by any Great Maker or Planner.

Nor did I seem to be living a life of my own making. It wasn't clear what story, if any, I was in; but it was clear that whatever was happening wasn't altogether of my own making. It was as though my life was being constructed out of fortuitous happenings and tortured choices, happenings and choices that could just as well have been otherwise or not been at all. Mine seemed a tenuous little life with no foundation.

"Michael," I said the next week, "I feel like I'm walking on thin air."

"That's the way I felt when I decided not to be a priest anymore."

"What?" I said. "You were a priest? I didn't know that."

"For eighteen years. I even taught theology in Rome for a while. Studied there, too."

"Then you know what I'm talking about?"

"Maybe," he said. "Perhaps you feel like you are walking on thin air because of a discrepancy. It's the discrepancy between a picture you have of life and the life you're living."

"How's that?"

"Well, the life you are living seems more fluid, risky and chancy than your picture of life allows, that's all. It's a common thing. Just change your picture of life and you remove the discrepancy. Maybe then you wouldn't feel so bad."

"But, Michael," I said, "don't you think there's something to what the Baptists said about—"

"Ted," he said, "I'm sorry to interrupt, but our time is up for today."

What I was getting ready to say when Michael called time on me was that maybe the old Baptist widow women weren't complete idiots in suggesting that one might live life as though it is made—and before made, planned. Maybe one can see one's life that way.

And wouldn't it be something to have both things at once: at the same time to acknowledge the fluidity and contingency in one's life, even to enjoy that, *and* to have the solidity and firmness that come from living a life that, in some sense, is made, where all the parts seem to fit.

The next week, I said, "Michael, I want both."

"Both what?"

"I want the old picture I had of life *and* to be truthful about feeling that my life turns on chance."

"*That's* curious," he said. "I thought we decided last week that the discrepancy is painful. To remove the pain you have to remove the discrepancy, which means, Ted, that you have to give up that old picture of your life as being planned before you live it. You just have to give that up."

I said, "I don't want to give that up."

"That's not surprising," he said. "You were reared that way. Still . . ." And here Michael's sentence trailed off and silence took over for a while. After a minute or two, I asked, "Well, what are you thinking?"

"It's a possibility," he said.

"Really?"

"Really. But I still think you're making a mistake."

"What's that?"

"You want prospectively what you can only have retrospectively."

I wasn't sure I was understanding a thing the man was saying, so it made sense to ask, "What are you saying?"

"Just what I said," he said. "I mean that retrospectively—when, one day in the future, you find yourself looking back, say, after thirty years—life might acquire the kind of stability and firmness your old picture promised you. Seen retrospectively, the story of your life may acquire a degree of stability and firmness, but I think you will have to wait a while for it."

"Wait for what?" I asked.

"Wait before you can acquire a deep-down sense that your life could not have been—nor would you have wanted it to be—any other way."

"But you said that I'm making a mistake. What's the mistake?"

"Ted, it's what I said. The mistake is to expect prospectively what you can only have retrospectively. Prospectively, your life will continue to be fluid, chancy."

"That's bad," I said.

"There's another possibility."

I said, "I doubt it."

He said, "You could find it interesting or fun. You would have to practice, but you could."

"Could what?"

"Ted, aren't you listening? I'm saying that you could, or may, find the chanciness of life interesting or just plain fun."

I said, "I doubt it."

"As I said, *you* would have to practice a long time."

"But, Michael," I asked, "what about that old Baptist picture?"

"That's not just Baptist, you know," he said. And then he took off talking about St. Augustine's *Confessions*. I almost interrupted to tell him that I was paying for me to talk to him, not to listen to him talk to me. He went on to say that, when Saint Augustine was forty-five years old, he wrote the story about how he got to be who he was. By that point, his life had acquired a kind of inevitability about it. That's what gave him authority as a teacher. He felt as though his life could have been no other way, that his life was as it was from the very beginning.

I wanted to say, "That's what I want, Michael, and that's what I don't have and don't expect to have." But I didn't.

Then Michael said, "Whenever I taught Augustine to the seminarians, I asked them to memorize one line from *The Confessions*. The line goes like this: *sic curas unumquemque nostrum tamquam solum cures, et sic omnes tamquam singulos.*"

"Michael," I said, "Baptists don't do Latin."

"Oh," he said, "I forgot." Then he went off talking again, this time explaining that when Augustine wrote that line he was at a sufficient remove from certain events of his life that he could see how things fit together, even the random details. By that point in his life, Augustine saw that he had become part of a story.

"Michael," I said, "what does the Latin mean?"

"Oh," he said, "it means, 'He cares for every one of us as though he had no other for whom to care. He cares for all as he cares for each.'"

"That's very curious," I said.

"Yes," he said, "it is."

Over the years I've thought a good deal about what my friend said that day. In many ways, he was right: I was making a mistake. I sometimes still

make it. The mistake is to expect always for life to unfold as it ought to unfold, as it has to unfold. To want too quickly for the pieces of life to cohere as in a well-wrought story.

I've tried to give it up, but I sometimes catch myself making the same mistake. Only now, I don't call it a mistake. I call it *my way of getting on*.

But at times you may see a pattern in life and see life lining out straight, tense, and inevitable. You may see your life becoming part of a story. And the story of your life may seem so stable that it feels as though it might well have been made in advance of your living it. Even those things that presented themselves as so much sand blowing in the wind may seem, retrospectively, somehow inevitable. Without each one of them, you would have missed part of the story and every part somehow seems necessary—even good—for the whole life to be what it is. At some point, somehow the parts seem mysteriously to fit together and form a whole grander and more satisfying than anything you ever could have imagined.

III

As I leave the deanship of the Honors College after these thirty-one years, I am inclined to think of my life in honors education in something of the same kind of way: things could not have been, nor would I want them to be, any way other than the way they were.

But once you get past fifty or sixty years old, you've had world and time enough to see why Saint Augustine would also confess that "the soul is a great abyss." This great explorer of the interior abyss hereby fesses up to a deep-down and abiding ignorance about himself. Only in the shadow of a confession of abysmal ignorance about the deepest things of himself could he venture something so audacious, something so comically exuberant, as, "He cares for every one of us as though He had no other for whom to care. He cares for all as he cares for each."

Would that it were so. May we do our part to make it so.

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Designing a Collaborative Blog about Student Success

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The term “web log,” or “blog,” was first coined in 1997 by Jorn Barger (Blood). Blogs have been used in education as online journals, discussion platforms, course websites, and alternatives to mainstream media publications (EDUCAUSE, 2005). Two of the more common blogging platforms, Wordpress <<http://www.wordpress.com>> and Blogger <<http://www.blogger.com>>, are relatively simple to use, requiring no knowledge of HTML to post entries. One of the many advantages of using blogs is that they can foster interaction among peers, thereby building community (EDUCAUSE, 2005; Richardson). For further explanation of how blogs work, Common Craft has created an easy-to-follow video entitled *Blogs in Plain English*.

According to the EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research's 2010 Study of Undergraduate Students and Information Technology, which surveyed close to 37,000 college students in the United States and Canada, 36% of the students noted that they contributed to blogs on at least a monthly basis; 11.6% of the students were using blogs in a course they were taking at the

time of the survey, 37.6% of whom were using blogs collaboratively as part of the course; 15% of the students read or contributed to blogs via an Internet-capable handheld device; and 37.3% of the students noted that they liked to learn through contributing to blogs, wikis, and websites.

The primary author has used blogs in honors courses since 2005 to post online discussion questions, course announcements, and project photos as part of a course blog (see Johnson) as well as to prompt students' personal reflections on their own individual blogs. The purpose of this article is to describe the most recent blogging project in an honors course—a collaborative student-success blog written for and by honors students.

COURSE BACKGROUND

The student-success blogging project was conceived as the primary project for the course Honors Professional Development: Community Outreach for sophomores in the University of Florida Honors Program. This course was the third in a series of four professional development courses available to honors students starting in their freshman year. Students first had the opportunity to take Introduction to Honors Professional Development, a one-credit first-year-experience course focusing on an action plan for involvement in undergraduate research, study abroad, internships, leadership, and community service as well as workshops on resumé development and interview skills. Assignments included weekly online discussion topics, faculty interviews, community service and philanthropy projects, activity papers, reflections from the various workshops, and a final action plan. With six sections of the course offered, close to 150 first-year honors students typically take the course during their first semester.

Students who took the Introduction course during their first semester were invited to apply for the second course, Honors Professional Development: Leadership Development. Twelve students were selected for the initial leadership course. While the Introduction course focused on acclimating freshmen to college and campus involvement, the leadership course more thoroughly defined the leadership goals and refined the skills needed to accomplish these goals. The small size of the class was beneficial to the students, allowing them to develop strong relationships with one another and get more personalized feedback on accomplishing their goals. The intimacy of the class also created a sense of responsibility and accountability among the individuals; when students presented their goals as part of weekly status updates, they were expected to follow through on the goals and let their classmates know the results.

In the Leadership Development course, each student was required to create an individual blog. Students developed at least ten blog posts throughout the semester about their efforts to get involved with research, internships, leadership, and other activities. While the in-class status reports were good for creating accountability among the students, the blogs served as a beneficial tool for individual reflection. The blogs forced the students to think about what they had accomplished and reflect on what they did well or what they needed to improve on moving forward; it was also helpful in formulating new goals.

The third semester course was developed by the students enrolled in the Leadership Development course. Ten of the twelve students from the leadership course continued into the third semester. Honors Professional Development: Community Outreach was offered for the first time during fall 2010. Students wanted an opportunity to give back to the general honors community after learning so much about themselves and developing their strengths throughout their first year. Students by this point had developed a strong sense of identification with the program and each other. While the students continued to provide in-class status reports and work on their individual blogs, much of the class was designed to work on a collaborative project for first-year honors students, which has garnered university-wide attention.

The fourth course in the series is being taught for the first time during the spring 2011 semester. In this capstone course, students will continue working on their collaborative project and also develop an electronic portfolio to display artifacts from all four semesters of the course series. Finally, students in the course will serve as mentors to the next cohort of students in the Leadership Development course.

STUDENT-SUCCESS BLOGGING PROJECT

The student-success blogging project was designed to help honors students achieve success in their first year. The students in the Community Outreach course wanted to share the knowledge and skills they had developed in their first year that potentially could benefit younger students. Entitled the Swamp Survival Blog <<http://www.swampsurvival.wordpress.com>>, this project enabled experienced students to share information about the resources and opportunities available on campus that could foster professional development and facilitate achievement of goals. These veteran students observed that many first-year students had several set goals but lacked a resource for information and assistance in achieving their goals.

While the blog was geared towards first-year students in the honors program, the students noted that its content could be helpful for all first-year students.

At the beginning of the semester, students in the advanced course selected a blog as their chosen community outreach outlet. The blog was modeled loosely after the Grade First Aid Blog, produced by the Office of Undergraduate Advising at the University of Oregon, which focused on academic advising tips and resources in blog and video-blog form. The class elected to post both regular and video blogs, with content focusing on a combination of personal advice and tips about campus and community resources.

A quick note about the video blogs: According to the 2006 *Horizon Report*, video blogging, or vlogging, was recognized as a technology to watch, particularly when it came to students being able to create their own content for educational use. The 2008 *Horizon Report* noted that grassroots video development, popularized by the ease of creating and distributing video via sites such as YouTube, was another up-and-coming educational technology phenomenon. The class thus decided to post their video blogs on a YouTube channel <<http://www.youtube.com/swampsurvival>> designed by the class.

Students posted content on the blog every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday throughout the semester, with the Friday posts in the form of video blogs. Each of the ten students was responsible for posting two of the blog topics individually and, in pairs, two video-blog topics. At the beginning of the semester, students generated a list of topics they were interested in posting and developed a blog schedule as a group. The class also generated a list of people they could interview for the video blogs.

Other class sessions at the beginning of the semester were dedicated to negotiating the format and design of the blog and to learning about Fair Use and Creative Commons guidelines for adding pictures to the blogs as well as music or external video clips to the video blogs. Fair Use and Creative Commons guidelines can be complex and confusing, but several good resources are available to interpret them (see EDUCAUSE, 2007; Jones; U.S. Copyright Office).

GENERATING BLOG AND VIDEO BLOG CONTENT

Twenty blogs were posted throughout the semester:

Places to Study	Finding Your Niche
Communicating with Professors	Procrastination
Getting around Gainesville	Local Attractions

On-Campus Housing: Area Governments	Staying Involved Off Campus
Gator Traditions	Following through on Goals
Finding Mentors	Being a Competitive Pre-Med Student
Time Management	Adding Majors and Minors
Resumés	Cover Letters
Becoming an Active Learner	Life Outside of Class

Students used a combination of personal experiences, references, and resources to generate the content of their blog posts. One student commented:

For the resumé blog, I mainly used information I could find online about resumés and my own personal experience of writing, editing, and having my resumé edited by others.

Another student cited different sources:

For the pre-med post, I integrated personal experience, knowledge from older friends and advisors, and information provided by UF (through the pre-health advising department, including the website and information sessions I have attended).

Ten video blogs were also posted throughout the semester:

Preparing for the Career Fair	Student Activities
Study Abroad Fair	Center for Leadership and Service
Tutoring	Academic Advising
Undergraduate Advising	Honors Program
Career Resource Center	Campus Wellness Services

For the video blogs, students used a variety of equipment and software to create and edit their videos. No one had to purchase any special equipment since they used only equipment and software that they already owned. To shoot the video, they used either their personal digital cameras or a webcam on their laptop. To edit the video, most students used Windows Movie Maker, readily available on PCs, or iMovie, available on Macs. One student used VideoPad, a freeware program.

To generate content for the videos, students scheduled interviews with professional staff and student contacts across campus. They also visited campus events to film footage and interviewed people on the spot. One student commented:

For the first video, we first brainstormed what kinds of things we thought people (freshmen in particular) would want to know about advising, and turned those into questions we wanted to have answered in our video.

Another wrote:

We visited the Study Abroad Fair and interviewed study abroad peer leaders. I used pictures and videos taken from the fair, as well as information from the UF International Center website.

Neither the blog posts nor the video blog posts were moderated by the instructor. A disclaimer was posted on the blog, stating that “. . . the students’ viewpoints are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the University of Florida Honors Program.” The instructor’s contact information was posted on the blog in case anyone had a question or comment about the blog’s content although no comments about the content were received.

BLOG READERSHIP AND IMPACT

The Swamp Survival blog was publicized on the Honors Daily Opportunities List, a daily e-newsletter sent to all UF honors students via email by the honors office. A brief description and a link to the blog were posted several times throughout the semester on the Daily. Individual blog and video blog posts also were linked to the UF Honors Program and Honors Professional Development pages on Facebook. The blog was linked on the course website for Introduction to Honors Professional Development, and the instructor distributed links to individual blog postings on Twitter. The instructor also presented on the blog during the Developing in Honors extended session on technology at the 2010 National Collegiate Honors Council annual conference. Finally, a reporter for *The Independent Florida Alligator* published an article on the blog, which led to increased campus-wide exposure (Peters).

The blog was set up on Wordpress, which provides an in-depth analysis of site statistics. From September 12 (first post on the blog) through December 31, 2010, there were 1,771 views of the blog. The most active day was September 29, 2010, the day the article was published in the *Alligator*, with 226 views. The average number of views per day was 15. Aside from the main blog page, the following individual posts received the most views, with the most viewed listed first: how to be a competitive pre-med student, places to study, getting around Gainesville, UF traditions, and procrastination. The top

referrers to the blog were the *Alligator* website, Facebook, Twitter, the course website for Introduction to Honors Professional Development, and the Honors Daily email.

Data on numbers of views are available directly from YouTube. The Swamp Survival YouTube channel itself had sixty views while individual videos were viewed a total of 417 times. The top-viewed videos in order of most viewed were: undergraduate research, preparing for the career fair, and student activities.

At the end of the semester, students in the course were asked to reflect on how they thought honors students might have benefited from the content on the Swamp Survival Blog. They all commented that they hoped their readers had learned from their unique perspectives and experiences as peers. They also believed they had provided content about resources first-year students might not have heard about otherwise. As one student noted, “One thing that I thought was super awesome about the blog is that it’s so much helpful information in one convenient place. Not only that, but this information is peer-to-peer.” Another student reflected that “since our first-year experience was so recent, we were able to think about what questions we encountered and what information we would have found useful throughout our first year.”

REFLECTIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In addition to helping first-year honors students through the blog, the students in the course learned from the project. In their end-of-course reflections, students said they gained experience in researching and planning, in-depth knowledge about campus resources, and awareness of how much information they had learned and retained throughout their first year in college:

By participating in this project I discovered how much I had learned in my first year of college. I did not have an older sibling or friend to guide me, and I was able to see how the blogs written could have helped me the year before.

I learned from everyone else’s blogs, too. Some blogs are inspirational, some are informative, and some are a mix. I learned about the wellness center and how to be a competitive pre-med student, etc. But overall, I learned more about how to make my experience here, at UF, more enjoyable and fulfilling.

The project not only taught me the basics of running an appealing and informative blog, but also gave me an expressive platform to use my writing and video editing skills. The information provided by my classmates made me more aware of resources on campus. Overall, it was a good learning experience, teaching us skills relevant to today's methods of disseminating information.

Given the success of the project, the group plans to continue the Swamp Survival Blog for the foreseeable future. The current students will continue working on the blog during their fourth-semester Professional Development Capstone course, and then the blog will transfer over to the next cohort of the Community Outreach/Capstone class the following year. Many topics remain to be covered for future blog posts, and students can revisit former topics as appropriate. The upcoming priority will be to increase readership/viewership of the blog and videos, as well as to make the blog more interactive by encouraging readers to leave comments.

IMPLICATIONS FOR OTHERS

Creating a blog is a relatively simple task since several free blogging platforms are available and no knowledge of HTML is needed to post content. Other honors programs or colleges interested in starting blogs similar to the Swamp Survival Blog need to consider several factors in advance:

- Who is the audience?—We focused on first-year honors students, but others could focus on prospective students, all current students, the general campus community, and/or parents and alumni.
- What is the focus of the blog?—Ours was student success. Others could highlight honors courses, faculty, or various opportunities within the program/college.
- Who will contribute content to the blog?—We used students taking a professional development course. Others might use their honors ambassadors or honors student council members, student employees, or students taking a particular honors course. We recommend allowing students to take ownership of the blog, with a faculty or staff member simply overseeing the project.
- How often will content be posted?—We posted content three times a week on a consistent schedule. The consistency allowed readers to

know exactly when they could expect to see new content on the blog. Others might want to limit content to once a week, but we would not recommend posting less frequently.

- How will the blog be marketed?—The blog content will not be helpful unless someone is reading it. A plan needs to be developed to advertise the blog to the intended audience.

The use of blogs by honors programs and colleges has a lot of potential, and a national honors blog might be a future development. The Swamp Survival Blog allowed students in the course to learn more about themselves and campus resources while creating content to help other honors students.

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Honoring the National Parks: A Local Adaptation of a Partners in the Parks Adventure

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INTRODUCTION

The National Collegiate Honors Council has long recognized that collaboration among institutions is important to honors education. Since its inception over five decades ago, NCHC has promoted the mutual exchange of ideas about honors in order to disseminate the best of these ideas as potential prototypes (Andrews). In addition to its annual NCHC conferences, which offer a large forum for sharing ideas, NCHC has fostered and supported a variety of collaborative programs such as Honors Semesters and Faculty Institutes, the most recent of which is the Partners in the Parks Program (PITP), which—like its predecessor programs—is designed not only

to provide educational opportunities for students and faculty in honors but to inspire educational innovations within honors programs and colleges across the country. PITP has already begun to spin off such innovations. The adaptation of the PITP program “Fire Island to Ellis Island” in a college course called “Honoring the Parks” demonstrates the way that colleges and universities can use NCHC resources to inspire new educational opportunities on their campuses.

Partners in the Parks became an NCHC experiential learning program in 2008. Designed to inspire commitment to America’s national parks, PITP is “predicated on a three-fold purpose: **to educate** students about the national parks, **to engage** them in recreational activities that are the essence of park experiences, and ultimately **to urge stewardship** of these treasured spaces through a lifetime of involvement” (Digby). In only four years the program already has more than three hundred alumni and an expanding number of national park venues (see Appendix). These week-long immersion seminars, in which students and faculty along with National Park Service (NPS) park rangers study a park from multiple perspectives, were not initially designed as credit-bearing courses, yet within a few years of the pilot program at Bryce Canyon, colleges started offering such experiences for credit. Heather Thiessen-Reily, Director of Honors at Western State College of Colorado, developed a PITP week at Black Canyon of the Gunnison as a rigorous three-credit course open to students from all NCHC programs and colleges; she describes the evolution and content of this course in *Partners in the Parks: Field Guide to an Experiential Program in the National Parks* (Digby, ch.3). In addition to courses specifically structured for credit, some member institutions that send students to PITP programs offer their participants credit based on journals, papers, or creative projects presented as evidence of learning outcomes worthy of academic credit.

In the adaptation we discuss below, a PITP program became the model for a course at a local college. The PITP host institution for “Fire Island to Ellis Island” is LIU, a mid-size private university with an urban (Brooklyn) and suburban (Post) campus in close proximity to a variety of NPS sites. Dormitory housing on both campuses allows the program to move students from Long Island to New York City over the course of a week. St. Francis College, by contrast, is a small, private institution housed in a single building in Brooklyn with no dormitory facilities. Despite the differences in host institutions, the variety and density of NPS sites in close proximity inspired the shaping of a course for commuter students at St. Francis. Particularly in view of the current emphasis on environmental issues and field-based learning, participating

in PITP programs might help faculty develop new courses well-adapted to their home campuses.

“FIRE ISLAND TO ELLIS ISLAND” (JOAN DIGBY)

Like NCHC’s City as Text™, Partners in the Parks appears to be developing a life of its own generating creative permutations that evolve naturally from local sites and participating institutions. During the summer of 2010, when LIU offered “Fire Island to Ellis Island” for a second time, Kathleen Nolan of St. Francis College in Brooklyn joined the program as a marine biologist with expertise in dune ecology. She camped with us on Fire Island and led field workshops introducing the students to dune habitats and local marine life.

Bringing together students and faculty from a variety of two- and four-year, public and private, large and small colleges and universities combines multiple perspectives in a way that energizes conversation and spawns new ideas. “Fire Island to Ellis Island,” for example, attracted students from two- and four-year schools in Florida, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, and California. For some, it was their first visit to New York. One student at a school in Boston turned out to be a native of Long Island who had travelled to Fire Island on his family’s boat many times before. He was amazed to discover how little he knew about that place as well as many of the other NPS sites in New York City venues. His revelation about how PITP can teach students to see even familiar landscapes with new vision ultimately gave Nolan an idea about offering a course for her Brooklyn students based on this quite local adventure that included many sites within commuting distance of St. Francis College.

In the “Fire Island to Ellis Island” PITP program, the NPS sites range from National Seashore to urban monuments and museums, and, although they may seem disparate, the two lenses through which we study this environment—water as a factor of local habitats and immigration as the historical essence of New York—are intimately related. New York is a city of islands stretching from Brooklyn and Queens to Montauk Point at the tip of Long Island; it is a landscape surrounded by water and deeply connected to the fishing and shipping industries and the port of New York. The history of New York, including its great lyrical poet Walt Whitman, begins on Long Island and moves west to “Manahatta.” There, in the great harbor at the confluence of two rivers, the Statue of Liberty presides as the iconic symbol of immigrant entry to America.

The week begins on Long Island in Oyster Bay (founded in 1653) Harbor, where students have the experience of sailing on a reconstructed nineteenth-century, gaff-rigged oyster sloop. Before Partners in the Parks came into being, I took my LIU Post honors program freshmen sailing on *Christeen* for a “harbor as text” mapping exercise. They studied the geological formation of Long Island, the marine animals dredged from the bottom, and the demographics reflected in boats on the water from Coast Guard patrols and oystermen to sailing schools and private yachts. Most of my students are native Long Islanders, and many engage in sailing and fishing; some even eat oysters, but, like most of us, few had ever applied analytical reflections to their home territory—all the more reason to integrate local, experiential learning into honors programs as a basic tool of developing awareness.

Also located in Oyster Bay is Sagamore Hill, the summer White House of President Theodore Roosevelt, who was instrumental in creating the National Park Service. Superintendent Tom Ross has been eager to host PITP, and on our last visit we were treated to a meeting with the architect in charge of the current restoration, a major NPS project that will take several years. On this occasion, the students assisted in landscape renovation by removing invasive Norway maple saplings so that the grounds could be restored to native species in place during Roosevelt’s tenure. Volunteer service is a key component of PITP, and Nolan’s 2011 course scoped out several places for future involvement. Her participation in the PITP “Fire Island to Ellis Island” trip also had a shaping influence on group dynamics that, in turn, inspired some of the curriculum and weather-related flexibility of the course that she developed.

In May 2010, Nolan’s sessions on barrier dune ecology and marine biology concluded on a rainy night with “Ecology Bingo,” an impromptu game she created based on the technical vocabulary she had earlier taught. This entertainment bonded her with the group so that, when she appeared again later in the week, students were most welcoming. She rejoined them for a self-guided neighborhood walk on The Lower East Side as a prelude to The Tenement Museum, a site run by the National Park Service that she later incorporated into her course. Nolan had already been thinking about modeling a class on “Fire Island to Ellis Island,” so her participation provided the opportunity to try out some of the components and consider how they might work for a cohort of commuter students from Brooklyn likely to see suburban and rural Long Island as exotic territory.

The PITP committee recommends that, before hosting a PITP program, faculty should first take part in one as a learning experience. A week of

observation is useful in developing a project and understanding how important it is to:

- cultivate relationships with the park supervisor and rangers;
- spend enough time in the park to plan activities;
- get to know the territory and learn how to navigate the site;
- develop an itinerary with morning, afternoon, and, if possible, evening programs;
- put together a set of readings that includes additional material in the event that weather conditions require alternative learning options; and
- understand the ultimate outcomes that are likely to result from the program.

As a participant in “Fire Island to Ellis Island,” Nolan observed the structure of a program that moved from site to site on a daily basis, which is not typical of most PITP programs, and we shifted from NPS recreational park sites on Long Island to New York City sites that illustrated the National Park Service involvement in monuments and museums. This model became useful in constructing a course based on moving commuter students to different venues for day-long sessions. Because this PITP program included city parks as well as NPS sites, this diversity also came to play a role in the course that evolved. The comparison between national and city parks and, in some other programs, state parks is a permutation of consciousness that has been developing as a sub-text of *Partners in the Parks*.

In “Fire Island to Ellis Island” we first camp on the National Seafront and then days later visit Olmstead’s Central Park and the new High Line, a city park constructed from old railroad tracks in the lower Manhattan meat-packing district, now planted with indigenous flowers and grasses. We process our responses to these sites by holding “circle” discussions in the parks, allowing us to contextualize such different places through the immediacy of observation. Students participating in “Fire Island to Ellis Island” also engage in a photography workshop at the beginning of the week, so their sensitivity to place and ability to record landscapes through a photographer’s eye sharpen as we progress. At the end of the week, when the students make their presentations to the group, an edited selection of their photographs helps them tell the story of their journey.

Unlike many of the PITP adventures, the New York experience is not strictly about nature. Once in the city, investigations largely shift from nature-watching to people-watching. Although we arrive on Liberty Island early in the morning, by the time we take the ferry to Ellis Island the crowds have swelled. Along the wall of names people search for ancestors who passed through the forbidding entry hall. How these immigrants lived in New York is dramatized in the reconstructed apartments of Jewish, Italian, and Irish families in the Lower East Side Tenement Museum run by NPS. Experiencing the inside of typical tenement apartments makes students aware of similar buildings that are visible in every neighborhood of the city and that still house people who have come to New York from all over the world. In one long day of city walks, the group travels from Chinatown to Harlem. Part of the adventure includes the experience of cuisines representing various immigrant cultures that are in a constant state of flux, which is nowhere more visible than on our final walk across the Brooklyn Bridge amid throngs of young people from all over the world who now call Brooklyn home.

Some of these young people are students at St. Francis College, a small institution housed in a single building near Brooklyn Borough Hall. How this PITP program was transformed into a three-credit course at St. Francis College in Brooklyn is a model for collaboration among institutions and for adapting NCHC programs to institutional contexts.

HONORING THE PARKS (KATHLEEN NOLAN)

I developed the curriculum for Honoring the Parks, a three-credit course at St. Francis College, as an adaptation of “Fire Island to Ellis Island” because I saw potential for engaging my students in a new understanding of their home environment. Although St. Francis students are, for the most part, native New Yorkers familiar with the city, they are generally unfamiliar with the National Parks even in their immediate locale. Having witnessed the degree to which students engaged in PITP cultivate their ability to “read” and interpret an environment, I made the decision to create a two-week course that included Fire Island as well as several of the New York City National Parks sites that are accessible for commuter students, who, with the exception of one overnight camping experience, were able to return to their homes each evening. For all these students, the itinerary was a stretch of their energy as well as imagination. Few had previous camping experience, and many had never visited any of the chosen parks and monuments within the city.

The students paid tuition and earned three credits as part of a two-week mini-mester in May 2011. The course was open to both honors program students and biology majors with GPAs above 3.2. Since I am a marine biologist, the course emphasized habitats, resident species, and the diversity of local biological environments. We visited many of the same venues as “Fire Island to Ellis Island,” but I also added others suitable to education in biology: Jamaica Bay (Gateway National Park), which is a major migratory path for birds; Great Kills National Park on Staten Island, which presents the opportunity to view unusual vegetation; and Brooklyn Bridge Park, a new city park that is contiguous with the National Parks system of the New York Harbor and provides access to the East River, where students were able to study diverse fish aggregations.

Although some students took the course for biology credit, others were permitted to take it for general honors program credit or for non-majors’ science credit. Honors courses at St. Francis are not assessed by traditional testing; students complete a reading list, submit a book report, write a reflective paper and give a PowerPoint presentation on an assigned theme. For this course, the required texts included diverse background material on the local sites, including Howard Markel’s book *Quarantine!: East European Jewish Immigrants and the New York City Epidemics of 1892* and the DVD of Ken Burns’s *The National Parks: America’s Best Idea*. A book report on *Quarantine!* was linked to the Lower East Side Tenement Museum. The Ken Burns series introduced students to national parks in other geographical regions so that they could research the history and geography of a place they might visit in a future PITP or other context. The reflective paper for the course was based on readings about Governor’s Island and the stakeholders involved in bidding for use of the property. Because students in the course had a number of complex projects to produce for assessment, the groups first met on campus for four days of scheduled lectures to prepare them for the experiential component of the following two weeks.

The syllabus had two discrete components. The first week was devoted to a variety of natural settings and the second week to mostly urban NPS museums and monuments. In addition to the set of readings, students received problems, observations, and experiments that included a debate over the future land use of Governor’s Island, a bird-watching assignment in Jamaica Bay, an analysis of water quality on Staten Island, and a diversity index of fish caught in the East River.

Like PITP, the course emphasized the ecological, recreational, aesthetic, and historical significances of the parks, and, like the PITP adventure “Fire Island to Ellis Island,” the course underwent some impromptu transformation as a result of heavy rain.

In keeping with the PITP tradition, I had planned to camp with the students at Watch Hill on Fire Island, and St. Francis College had purchased five Coleman four-person tents. Two weeks prior to the course students with little or no camping experience practiced setting up the tents in a classroom. The students arrived on Fire Island in light drizzle and were able to set up tents and cook a meal. Ranger Valentine engaged the students in an ecological exploration, and, when it poured the next morning, she came through for these students, as she had done the previous year for the 2010 PITP group, with a perfectly dry house. Maintaining amiable relationships with park rangers has proven to be essential.

Alternative planning is essential. When another storm prevented the students from observing horseshoe crabs mating in Jamaica Bay, we were able to watch an introductory segment of Ken Burns’s *The National Parks: America’s Best Idea*. Later in the week we were again thwarted when, intending to do an experiment on water quality on Staten Island, we were deterred by not just rain but lightning. The students thus had some reflective time to consider the multiple uses of national parks, including the recreation and nature study that Mother Nature had prevented them from doing.

We were grateful for the half-hour of sun that enabled our canoe trip in Jamaica Bay, part of the Gateway National Recreational Area managed by NPS. Many students had never been in a canoe, and so the experience was exhilarating for them. Viewing Riis Park from the water allowed students to observe many species of shore birds that were unfamiliar to the group. Students also went bird watching with the Audubon Society at an area of the park called Dead Horse Bay, where they were disturbed to discover the origin of the name and its connection to glue factories once located here. Though the area has been reclaimed, the beach is still littered with old glass bottles and would be a natural site for a volunteer PITP clean-up project.

Another section of the park is Floyd Bennett Field, New York’s first municipal airport, where people now fly model airplanes in connection with a museum of historic aircraft. One of the themes that emerged from the Queens segment of the course was the reclamation of wasteland for conversion into park sites, a resonant urban theme that might be expanded in the future both in my course and in the next PITP iteration of “Fire Island to Ellis Island.”

From Queens, the course then moved to Staten Island, a borough yet to be included in PITP. At least five of the seventeen students had never ridden on the free Staten Island Ferry even though they are native New Yorkers. Our destination was the Great Kills National Park, another wasteland reclamation site, which has a beachfront, freshwater swamp, and interesting vegetation. From the ferry, a train ride and a two-mile walk got us to the beach, where a thunderstorm forced us to abandon the water quality experiments.

Again an alternative learning experience filled in. The students were given an article to read about Governor's Island on the train/ferry rides home. They showed scant interest in reading until the assignment was framed as a contest. Each of five teams had to make a convincing case that their group would be the one to develop Governor's Island, with the groups each representing actual bidders for the site: casino developers; New York University, a private institution of higher learning; the City University of New York, a public institution of higher learning; environmentalists; and an artists' collective. Students read, took copious notes and presented their arguments on the ferry back to Manhattan. Even though most were not in favor of this option, the casino developers gave the best presentation!

During the second week, the urban component that included the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, and the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, we had a welcome break in the weather. A warm afternoon found us walking through the streets of Manhattan to the African Burial Ground, discovered by accident during the excavation for a federal office building. Over 50,000 African American graves, paved over during the growth of the city, were discovered and memorialized, and the NPS walking tour now provides a very positive example of the park service's commitment to historical research.

On the last day of the course the group went seining at the Brooklyn Bridge Park in the same borough as St. Francis College. We calculated a diversity index for the East River based on our catch, which included moon jellyfish, grass shrimp, silverside fish, bay anchovies, tomcod, striped bass, invasive Japanese crab, and a Northern pipefish, which looks like a straightened seahorse. The students were amazed to see this rich marine life in what was once polluted water, and thus we had a final lesson in the role parks play in reclamation.

Using the PITP practice of student evaluation, we asked participants in the course to rate their experiences on a 1–5 Likert scale, with 5 being “informed me the most.” Their three top choices were (1) Tenement Museum, (2) Floyd Bennett Field canoeing, and (3) Brooklyn Bridge Park. The students may

have felt most comfortable in the Tenement Museum because it was in a busy urban environment. Since many of our students are first-generation college attendees, their top choice may well reflect their empathy toward immigrants. In the future, we will design a survey to assess students' comfort level with various environments.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN "FIRE ISLAND TO ELLIS ISLAND" AND HONORING THE PARKS

The major influence of the PITP program on the credit-bearing course at St. Francis College is obvious in the list of features they have in common:

1. Students engage in an intensive learning experience in regional parks and museum/monument sites that stretch from rural Long Island to the urban boroughs.
2. Students develop an understanding of the historical, ecological, and recreational dimensions of parks as well as the opportunity for research and volunteer work within these environments.
3. Students bond as a result of the time frame and intensity of the experience.
4. Students develop their abilities to do collaborative work and share their reflections.
5. "Circles" function as a superb reflective method of processing information and bringing the group together on a daily basis to review experiences and learning.
6. Students gain sensitivity to the national parks as well as awareness of the operational differences among national, state, and local parks.
7. As a result of their experiences students might bring family and friends to visit these parks.
8. Final student presentations bring closure to the experience.

Some difference between the PITP program and the course include the following:

1. While students engaged in the PITP program are expected to read a selection of essays and to produce writing and visual responses to the

- sites, their work is not evaluated in any formal way. Students in the credit-bearing course are under pressure to produce materials that will be assessed.
2. While students attending a PITP seminar have email contact with the leaders prior to the week, students in the course meet for four days in advance of the experiential component.
 3. While students attending a PITP program attend a variety of two- and four-year colleges around the country, students in the St. Francis course come from the same institution and are local to the area; thus, they cannot bring the different sets of perceptions and awareness that arise in a multi-regional, multi-institutional group.
 4. Students commuting each day to a new site and returning home at night do not have the opportunity to spend much recreational time together and intensify the bonding that takes place in a PITP seminar. The commuters did, however, achieve some degree of bonding during their one-night camping experience.
 5. Nevertheless, because students come from the area local to the parks, they have a greater opportunity to revisit the parks and deepen their interest.
 6. Local students have a greater opportunity to explore research, job or volunteer possibilities in these venues.

CONCLUSION

The collaboration between LIU Post and St. Francis College that took place through an NCHC Partners in the Parks program is one example of the way NCHC offers opportunities for innovation in pedagogy and curriculum. The PITP programs are inter-institutional versions of the team teaching that many of us do or wish we could do on our home campuses, offering opportunities to gain fresh ideas about how to structure learning, approach academic subjects, and excite students. The synergy and cross-fertilization that arise from such collaboration can reenergize teachers and inspire students. When members of the teaching team include park rangers and the class meets in some of the most spectacular settings in the United States, the results are exceptional experiences available to students in the whole range of honors programs and colleges represented in the NCHC. Most of all, we recommend

the synergy that arises from institutional collaboration and creative learning models. Linked to national parks around the nation, PITP adventures draw local colleges into rich course programming that develops student sensitivity, understanding, and commitment to natural landscapes, wildlife, environmental resources, and thoughtful stewardship.

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APPENDIX

Partners in the Parks Projects to Date

Park	Date	Director(s)
Acadia	2008, 2009 2012	Kathleen King, University of Maine-Augusta Gregory Fahy, University of Maine-Augusta
Black Canyon	2009, 2010 2012	Heather Thiessen-Reily, Western State College of Colorado of the Gunnison
Bryce Canyon	2008, 2009 2012	Matt Nickerson and Todd Petersen, Southern Utah University
Cape Hatteras	2010	Bill Atwill, University of North Carolina Wilmington
Cedar Breaks	2009, 2010 2012	Matt Nickerson and Todd Petersen, Southern Utah University
Denali	2010	Channon Price, University of Alaska- Fairbanks
Fire Island to Ellis Island	2008, 2010 2012	Joan Digby, Cris Gleicher, and James Clarke, LIU Post & LIU Brooklyn
Grand Canyon- Parashant	2008, 2009, 2010, 2011	Matt Nickerson and Todd Petersen, Southern Utah State University
Great Smoky	2011	Bill Atwill, University of North Carolina- Wilmington
Joshua Tree	2009	Matt Nickerson, hosted by Arizona State University
Olympic	2011, 2012	Aley Willis, University of Washington
Sequoia & King's Canyon	2012	Johnny MacLean, Southern Utah University
U. S. Virgin Islands	2012	Kathleen Nolan, St. Francis College Joan Digby, LIU Post
Zion	2008, 2009, 2010, 2011	Joy Ochs, Mt. Mercy College

Mini-PITP Excursions at NCHC Annual Conferences:

San Antonio Missions (2008)

Washington, D.C., Mall (2009)

Montezuma's Castle, Arizona (2011)

“In Landlessness Alone Resides the Highest Truth”; or, At Sea with Honors

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The recent explosion on an oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico was a grim reminder of the BP disaster in 2010, from which Gulf Coast residents and workers are still trying to recover. We all must have responded to that disaster with a similar sense of outrage as we watched the live underwater video feed of millions of gallons of oil spewing into the ocean and saw images of oil-soaked wildlife, coastlines, and marshlands. Shared memories of Hurricane Katrina heighten our collective sympathy for the people whose livelihoods this disaster still threatens. At the same time, our individual responses are shaped by personal associations—such as relatives living in the Gulf, memories of a beach vacation, or a fondness for Gulf shrimp. As students and teachers, we also cannot help but view such events through our disciplines, our majors and minors, the books we read, and the courses we take and teach. I imagine the oil spill has already become a reference point in classes ranging from Microbiology and Environmental Studies to Economics and Public Relations.

As an English professor specializing in American literature and possessing a passion (often approaching obsession) for one nineteenth-century American novel in particular, I was thrilled when an article titled “The Ahab Parallax” appeared in the 13 June 2010 *New York Times*. It identifies striking parallels between the disaster at BP’s Deepwater Horizon rig and Herman Melville’s 1851 fictional account of death and destruction at sea as the crew of the *Pequod* hunts for whale oil, a valuable commodity on which nineteenth-century Americans were as dependent as we are on petroleum today. These echoes, Randy Kennedy writes, are “painfully illuminating as the spill becomes a daily reminder of the limitations, even now, of man’s ability to harness nature for his needs” (1). A former student emailed me as soon as he saw the article: “Melville always seems to get the last laugh somehow,” he wrote (Anderson). One reason I love to teach *Moby-Dick*; or, *The Whale* is the seemingly limitless ways in which it speaks to human actions and events in our own age. Melville’s novel has been used to comment on the rise of fascism, the War on Drugs, the War on Terror, and debates over Social Security and national health care. “Each age, one may predict, will find its own symbols in *Moby-Dick*,” a Melville biographer wrote in 1929. “Over that ocean the clouds will pass and change, and the ocean itself will mirror back those changes from its own depths” (Mumford 194).

In each instance I just listed, as in the *New York Times* article, the novel’s enduring relevance is anchored in Ahab’s overwhelming and self-destructive desire for revenge. Obsessed with destroying Moby Dick, the white whale that maimed him, the captain only destroys himself, his ship, and almost everyone on board. A fertile and pliable symbol, the character of Ahab, the peg-legged captain, has become a cultural touchstone even for people who have never read *Moby-Dick*. But few who have not studied the novel can tell us much about Melville’s narrator beyond his famous opening line: “Call me Ishmael.” Perhaps the most inspired and enduring aspect of *Moby-Dick*, however, is not its warning of the self-destruction wrought by humanity’s Ahab-like propensity for dominance and revenge but the alternative embodied by Ishmael, the *Pequod*’s sole survivor. I will return to the oil spill later, but for now I want to test this hypothesis in the context of honors education. To honors students I would say, I will call *you* Ishmael. The forces that attracted you to honors, I believe, are those that draw Melville’s Ishmael to the sea. And the qualities that ensure Ishmael’s survival are ones that will lead to success in honors and beyond.

The comparison might not seem very appealing at first glance. Ishmael in the opening pages of *Moby-Dick* is penniless, directionless, depressed,

and suicidal. Portents of doom are unmistakable as soon as he sets sail: the gloomy *Pequod*, Melville writes, “blindly plunged like fate into the lone Atlantic” (115). Of the ocean’s awesome power he observes: “however baby man may brag of his science and skill, and however much, in a flattering future, that science and skill may augment; yet for ever and for ever, to the crack of doom, the sea will insult and murder him” (298). I doubt very many students would join an honors program if the invitation promised the kind of voyage Melville describes, and as stressful as the first few weeks in an honors program might be, I doubt students feel as down and out as Ishmael does at the beginning of *Moby-Dick*. But if I am right about what draws students to honors, they seek the “mystical vibration” Ishmael experiences as soon as he is “out of sight of land.” There he proclaims: “in landlessness alone resides the highest truth” (5, 117).

Ishmael fleshes out the meaning of landlessness: “all deep, earnest thinking is but the intrepid effort of the soul to keep the open independence of her sea; while the wildest winds of heaven and earth conspire to cast her on the treacherous, slavish shore” (116–17). The real danger, in other words, is not the openness and violence of the unknown sea, which Melville aligns with “deep, earnest thinking,” but the illusory sense of safety and comfort promised by the shore, or by our traditional, accepted ways of living and thinking. The challenge is to resist those winds—be they generated by fear, practicality, parents, social norms, or self-doubt—that conspire to push us back to the known world of dry, stable ground. Any honest attempt to apply Melville’s imagery to honors programs must acknowledge that we tend to attract some of the university’s most *grounded* and goal-oriented students. Fear of the C—here I mean that dreaded letter grade—sometimes prevents such students from taking risks. But even if its practical benefits first draw students to honors—it can steer them toward the right graduate program or help land an ideal job—it would be much easier and in a sense more practical for them to hug the shore, to concentrate solely on their majors and minors rather than taking on honors-level requirements and participating in more challenging courses. What then compels them to go to sea with honors?

“You must have plenty of sea-room to tell the Truth in,” Melville wrote in praise of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s work (“Hawthorne and His Mosses,” 246). In praise of Ralph Waldo Emerson, another nineteenth-century iconoclast, Melville proclaimed: “I love all men who *dive*. Any fish can swim near the surface, but it takes a great whale to go down stairs five miles or more” (“To Evert A. Duyckinck,” 121). An honors curriculum invites students to dive deep and provides the “sea-room” in which to do so. Although honors curricula

are designed to complement a student's major course of study, they typically exist outside of all disciplines, departments, colleges, majors, and minors. They surround the rest of academia in the same way that the ocean surrounds islands and continents. Also like the ocean, they have the potential to dramatically enhance the value of the land they touch—transforming majors and minors, if you will, into beachfront property. With Ishmael's journey in mind, perhaps it is more fruitful to conceive of honors not as the sea itself but as the vessel that carries us out to sea, out of our elements, away from familiar landmarks and reference points, and into the realm of landlessness.

When Ishmael signs on for a whaling voyage he casts his lot with one of his era's lowliest, dirtiest, and most dangerous occupations, but, as he describes it, "a whale-ship was my Yale College and my Harvard" (122). The fact that Ishmael spends most of his time at sea not hunting whales, exactly, but thinking about them, deeply, transforms the *Pequod* into a floating ivy-league campus or honors program. Like most nineteenth-century Americans back on shore, his crewmates see the whale only as a commodity, as something to be exploited for profit and convenience. Some people today view an academic degree in a similar light. For Ishmael, however, the whale becomes what one literary critic calls "a test of the imagination" (Adler 64). Ishmael strives to comprehend the whale, its individual parts—its flukes, its flippers, its blowhole, its blubber—as well as its total being. Because this gigantic mammal is constantly in motion (John Milton's *Paradise Lost* describes whales as "moving land"), and because neither a whale's corpse nor a whale's skeleton can ever approximate the reality of a living, breathing whale as it exists in the ocean, its meaning proves slippery. To grasp it, Ishmael must try out a range of approaches, traditions, and perspectives. He examines the whale in art, in literature, and in astronomy. He applies the tenets of science, religion, archaeology (taking a "fossiliferous . . . point of view"), legal history, and philosophy (which Ludwig Wittgenstein appropriately describes as "a leaky boat which must be repaired while at sea") (Melville 496; qtd. in Evans 1). As he struggles to comprehend the mighty leviathan, Ishmael's mind grows in proportion to his subject. "Such, and so magnifying, is the virtue of a large and liberal theme!" he proclaims. "We expand to its bulk" (497).

Ishmael approaches the whale—which comes to embody all mysteries of life, time, and the universe, "the finite known and infinite unknown" (Adler 63–64)—just as you might approach such "large and liberal themes" as Truth, Beauty, Ethics, Revolution, and Science and Religion in the first required course of an honors curriculum, an interdisciplinary first-year honors seminar.

For students as well as for the teams of professors who teach such a seminar, taking an interdisciplinary approach to big questions encourages and rewards a sea-faring flexibility of mind and a propensity for deep-diving thought. The goal is to reach a deeper, more nuanced and multifaceted understanding of the seminar topic by semester's end, but its ultimate meaning should elude our grasp. We should remain at sea, skeptical of anyone who claims to stand on firm ground with a definition of true Beauty or with one timeless and universal Truth. Melville, after all, manages to fill the 600-plus pages of his novel with more disciplines, traditions, and approaches than we might even begin to consider in one semester (or even in four years of undergraduate study), and still Ishmael's knowledge of the whale remains incomplete. "Dissect him how I may," he confesses, "I but go skin deep; I know him not, and never will" (414).

Ishmael's words might sound like an admission of defeat but they articulate a central theme of *Moby-Dick*, one that embodies the best practices of honors inquiry. Although not connected to any one department or discipline, honors programs acknowledge that successful students must commit to their majors and minors in order to master the assumptions, values, and methodologies of their particular fields; a solid grounding is essential to success in graduate school or in one's chosen profession. At the same time, honors curricula typically encourage students to remain open to other approaches and to alternative perspectives. This fluidity, this embrace of landlessness, enables Ishmael to survive when the *Pequod* splinters and sinks. Ishmael's relationship with a crewmate nurtures the flexibility of mind we see in his approach to the whale. Although he initially shrinks in fear from this tattooed stranger whom he assumes to be a heathenish savage (and possibly a cannibal), Ishmael grows to love and respect Queequeg. He learns to get out of his own skin and to question his cultural assumptions and prejudices through Queequeg's eyes (Karcher, *Shadow* 67–72). At novel's end, Queequeg's coffin, on which all his mysteriously symbolic tattoos have been etched, becomes Ishmael's life raft.

If Ishmael represents the potentially life-preserving power of a fluid and flexible mind, then Ahab illustrates the danger of becoming so committed to one way of seeing the world that your mind precludes all other possibilities. The goal of a whaling voyage, of course, is to hunt as many whales as possible. Ahab, however, is obsessed with tracking and destroying just one particular whale, which he insists on defining in only one way: he sees the white whale as a malevolent affront to his own power and independence. Ahab's "monomania," as Melville calls it, is manifested physically in his literal inability to

stray from course: carved into the ship's deck at regular intervals are holes to accommodate the captain's peg leg; like a plastic figure in a Lego play set, he remains rigidly anchored in place. Ahab goes to sea, we might say, but he is never really *at sea* (just as one might go to college but never really be *in college*). Unlike Ishmael, therefore, Ahab will never discover anything about the whale, the world, or himself. As Joyce Sparer Adler suggests, Ahab "does not really want to see more than he does, or to sort out complexities, subtleties, and interconnections" (68). Melville even dares to imply that one of America's most revered heroes (at least in the nineteenth century) approached his mission of exploration and discovery with a perspective as narrow as Ahab's: "we know the sea to be an everlasting terra incognita," Melville writes, "so that Columbus sailed over numberless unknown worlds to discover his one superficial western one" (298). Fixated on finding land and gold, Christopher Columbus skimmed over—without even considering—the undiscovered universes below him, worlds we still have barely fathomed.

"The only true voyage," Marcel Proust suggests, "would be found not in traveling to strange lands but in having different eyes, in seeing the universe with the eyes of another person, of a hundred others, and seeing the hundred universes each of them sees, which each of them is" (qtd. in Shattuck 103). A sperm whale's eyes are situated on two separate sides of its head, notes Ishmael. He therefore assumes that the whale "must see one distinct picture on this side, and another distinct picture on that side." "[I]s his brain so much more comprehensive, combining, and subtle than man's," he wonders, "that he can at the same moment of time attentively examine two distinct prospects, one on one side of him, and the other in an exactly opposite direction?" The placement of a human's eyes, after all, makes "it . . . impossible for him, attentively, and completely, to examine any two things . . . at one and the same instant of time; never mind if they lie side by side and touch each other" (360–61). The closest humans can come to achieving this is in groups, be it on a whale ship—"with look-outs at the mast-heads, eagerly scanning the wide expanse around them," reads one of the "Extracts" Melville collects at the beginning of his novel, a whale ship has "a totally different air from those engaged in a regular voyage" (xlix–l)—or in small, discussion-based honors classes.

Moby-Dick celebrates the fact that a typical whaling voyage brought together for a common purpose individuals from such radically different backgrounds—not only in terms of craft but also in terms of language, culture, nationality, region, religion, and race—that similarly diverse collectives

would be impossible to find on land. The classroom is a diverse environment in less obvious ways, not just in terms of disciplines, majors, and minors (this is especially so in general education and interdisciplinary courses) but also in terms of experiences, values, and beliefs. Equally important, the discussion-based format of honors courses fosters a level of engagement with competing perspectives increasingly rare in our society. While Ishmael's mind glides with ease from perspective to perspective, Ahab steadfastly refuses to consider any perspective but his own. Something similar occurs when characters interpret images on a gold doubloon Ahab nails to the masthead as a reward for the first crew member to spy Moby Dick. Each of the sailors discovers a different meaning in the coin, but they never discuss their interpretations with each other (as one would in a seminar). Might the crew of the *Pequod* have been able to challenge their captain's authority, we must wonder—and to chart an alternative course for their voyage—if their search for meaning had been not a solitary, individual act but a communal one?

In *Common as Air: Revolution, Art, and Ownership*, philosopher and poet Lewis Hyde worries that marketplace values have turned certain ideas, discoveries, and creative productions into private property when they should be considered property we all hold "in common" (3). He proposes an alternative value system founded on the ideal of a "cultural commons," which is rooted in "the humanist idea that creativity builds on a bounty inherited from the past, or gathered from the community at hand" (79). Hyde encourages us to recognize that "the creative self" is not "solitary and self-made" but "collective, common and interdependent" (Smith 43). Just as training in an individual major is strengthened by interdisciplinary work, especially when such work takes place in the realm of landlessness offered by an honors program, Hyde's thesis suggests that the discussion-based classroom offers us the opportunity to do much more than plumb the depths of our individual subjectivities. Such an environment encourages us to discover and embrace a state of intersubjectivity—an ever-evolving identity defined not in isolation but always in relation to others. As Michael S. Roth points out in response to recent efforts to call into question the value of a liberal arts education (or even the practicality of higher education in general), interdependence was one of the "habits of learning" embraced by philosopher and psychologist John Dewey: "For Dewey, these habits included awareness of our interdependence; nobody is an expert on everything." The contrast between Ishmael and Ahab again proves instructive. Ahab curses what he calls our "mortal inter-indebtedness" even as the ship's carpenter crafts him a new leg (514). Ishmael, who at one

point is literally tied to Queequeg as his companion dangles precariously over shark-infested waters, learns to embrace the reality that our fates—indeed our very identities—are inescapably intertwined. While Ishmael’s mind expands to accommodate his “large and liberal theme,” therefore, his identity simultaneously becomes as fluid, open, and expansive as the whale’s.

Dewey’s “habits of learning” also “emphasized ‘plasticity,’ an openness to being shaped by experience” (Roth), and recent work in neuroscience suggests that our brains are indeed malleable. Even a mature brain changes according to environment, stimulus, and use. Similar discoveries in the field of epigenetics posit that our “[g]enes and the environment are as inseparable and inextricable as letters in a word or parts in a car.” “Every day in every way,” David Shenk explains in *The Genius in All of Us*, “you are helping to shape which genes become active. Your life is interacting with your genes” (27). Such theories are at once startling and reassuring. Shenk’s survey of world history, after all, identifies as many “achievement black holes” as “achievement clusters,” all fostered, he believes, by cultural landscapes (118). Focusing on our present culture, Nicholas Carr argues in *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains* that our brains are being rewired by the Internet in ways that make it more difficult for us to think deeply and at length about subjects—to ponder the whale, for example, or to read *Moby-Dick*. “Once I was a scuba diver in the sea of words,” Carr confesses, but “[n]ow I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski” (7). Carr’s critics emphasize the treasure trove of information now at our fingertips and suggest that multitasking and social networking might be reshaping our brains in beneficial ways. Author and entrepreneur Steven Johnson highlights these benefits in his critique of *The Shallows*, which appeared in the *New York Times* alongside a wonderful illustration of a big-brained octopus smiling broadly and grasping a different electronic gadget in each of its tentacles. (I won’t dare wade into this debate, but I doubt if any of us will spy a pod of whales—or a multitasking octopus—if we are up in the mast-heads texting our friends back on shore; that said, I will disclose that the former student who sent me the article that inspired this essay did so via his iPhone.)

Working with honors students and seeing the kind of work they produce in honors courses, we can hope for the future no matter what Google might be doing to our brains. Epigenetic research and theories of neuroplasticity suggest that, in joining an honors program and completing its requirements, students are not simply accumulating a storehouse of knowledge and strengthening their transcripts but are selecting an environment that might literally

alter the landscape (or seascape) of their minds. Even more important, perhaps, such theories highlight the responsibility of those with the power to do so—program directors, department heads, deans, administrators, and legislators—to create and sustain environments that foster excellence, that nurture “achievement clusters”; this should be the core mission of honors programs everywhere. As Melville’s novel suggests, the best way to achieve such a goal is to embrace landlessness. A testament to the power of symbol, *Moby-Dick*; or, *The Whale* provides students, teachers, and directors with a rich and pliable metaphor through which to imagine and articulate the direction, shape, and value of honors programs.

When we shift our focus from imagination to application, a close reading of *Moby-Dick* suggests that an honors program can practice landlessness by maintaining its commitment to small, discussion-based classrooms and, above all, by demonstrating the value of interdisciplinary work. Landlessness benefits not just students but also instructors and departments (which can, after all, become too insular). The University Honors Program (UHP) at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, for instance, provides a much-needed opportunity for faculty from all disciplines to practice the values of landlessness by collaborating with each other in courses such as our first-year honors seminar. Small groups of students rotate between three instructors from different disciplines after an initial class session involving all students and instructors, but the instructors work together to establish shared goals and a common theme. Such collaboration between rotating, constantly changing sets of instructors ensures that the seminar’s focus remains free-floating or landless; it will never be anchored permanently to one discipline or to one question or theme. The practice of landlessness is also at the heart of Culture Connection, the UHP’s second core course, in which students develop “strategies for engaging deeply with cultural experiences and events” by researching, attending, and writing about such events (“Honors Core Courses”). No matter what their home departments or particular disciplines might be, Culture Connection instructors attend and engage art, music, and theater events alongside students, which is another practice of landlessness that can help an honors program build bridges between departments. Film critic A. O. Scott suggests a less obvious but equally important way a course devoted to cultural criticism promotes the values of landlessness as embodied by *Moby-Dick*: “Criticism is a habit of mind, a discipline of writing, a way of life—a commitment to the independent, open-ended exploration of works of art in relation to one another and the world around them.”

No matter how successful an honors program or college might be in creating an environment that challenges students while modeling for them the habits of mind essential to a successful and fulfilling life, the real challenge is to maintain hope even when we survey the more expansive and daunting sea into which students will sail after graduation, the one facing environmental disasters and economic calamities beyond the control of even the most dedicated honors program director. But with history and Herman Melville as our guides, we can discover reasons to be hopeful even in these uncertain times. Melville could never have written *Moby-Dick* if not for his grueling experiences at sea, laboring on a whale ship and learning to question the values and assumptions of his society back on land. And he never would have become a common sailor if his wealthy family had not lost its fortune. The literal definition of “landlessness” is “not possessing land” or “having no landed property” (“Landless,” def. 1). To be “landless” is to be broke. As much as I dislike attempts to categorize our students’ generation (the kind of thing to which students are often subjected at graduation ceremonies and honors convocations), studies comparing the impact of the Great Depression with that of our recent economic crisis suggest generational patterns that reinforce the wisdom behind Melville’s brilliant riff on the word “landlessness.” Sociologist Glen H. Elder, Jr., argues that the youngest children affected by the Great Depression grew up to fear change and risk. As students, they were described as “docile notetakers” (Zernike 1). But their older siblings proved, like Melville and Ishmael, more creative and flexible in navigating a world in which traditional assumptions and expectations could no longer be taken for granted. Our Great Recession, some believe, has already produced similar trends, with the current generation of students becoming more civic-minded, more creative, and more willing to take risks. A proposed name for the generation to follow, the one comparable to the risk-averse youngest children of the Great Depression, is “homelanders” (Zernike 4), a label rooted in the age of homeland security but acquiring deeper resonance in the context of Melville’s evocative contrasting of land and sea.

However the current economic crisis might influence our personalities, mindsets, and actions in the future, the Gulf oil spill has already brought a greater sense of urgency to the search for alternative energy sources. To our modern sensibilities, it is difficult to imagine a more brutal and disturbing business than the hunt and slaughter of whales, but the words of a nineteenth-century whaling captain suggest that we might well view the source of much of today’s energy and many of our consumer products in a similar

light. Explaining the title of a poem in which she re-imagines Ishmael as the sole survivor of an explosion on a modern-day offshore oil rig, Elizabeth Schultz recounts the captain's words when he witnessed the gush from one of the first land-based oil wells: "By God, they've harpooned Mother Earth" (107). Unlike Ahab, this captain apparently learned to see the natural world with new eyes while at sea; like Ishmael, he came to see the world in a whale. A similar worldview is behind a recent breakthrough in green technology: inspired by the bumps on a humpback whale's pectoral fins—a source of awe and wonder for Ishmael—a Canadian-based company named WhalePower has developed a more efficient design for wind and hydroelectric turbines (Greenemeier; "WhalePower"). These kinds of innovations are more likely to originate with thinkers who cross disciplines and embrace collaboration. Equally important, they follow the principles science writer Janine Benyus laid out more than a decade ago in *Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired by Nature*. We must study the natural world not in order to see "what we can *extract* from" it, she urged, but rather to see "what we can *learn* from" it (2). Such a shift in perspective demands the courage to question traditional assumptions and the creativity to imagine alternatives. It requires us to approach the world, its problems, and its mysteries as Herman Melville and the best practices in honors inquiry encourage us to—not by clinging to the "slavish shore" but by heading out to sea.

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Ask Me about ISON: The Risks and Rewards of Teaching an Interdisciplinary Honors Course on a Scientific Event Unfolding in Real Time

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On September 21, 2012, two astronomers using a telescope in the International Scientific Observing Network near Kislovodsk, Russia, discovered a comet that came to be formally known as C/2012 S1 and was popularly called Comet ISON. Just a year later, two honors instructors in Wichita, Kansas, found themselves teaching a course on Comet ISON that came to be formally known as Fire in the Sky and was popularly referred to as “the comet course.”

The behavior of comets is notoriously difficult to predict. Nevertheless, even from its first detection Comet ISON showed signs of being an unusual and significant comet. Some commentators went so far as to predict that it would be “the comet of the century,” bright enough to be seen during daylight, with a tail extending as much as a quarter of the way across the sky. This

possibility was enough to inspire us, a planetarium astronomer (Ratcliffe) and a philosopher of science with an interest in the history of astronomy (Vanderburgh), to propose a co-taught honors course that would look at scientific, historical, philosophical and other topics raised by this interloper from the edge of the solar system.

The success of new interdisciplinary courses is never guaranteed. Especially considering that we were deliberately planning to “make it up as we went along,” that is, to adapt what we were teaching to the weekly news about the performance of the comet, we did not dare to predict that ours would be the course of the century. The course turned out so well, though, that we believe other honors instructors could profitably borrow some of what we did in similarly styled courses even if they are not lucky enough to have sufficient advance notice of a potentially stunning comet.

Our course was about a scientific event unfolding in real time. The potential of such courses as honors-quality experiences is excellent; the degree of excitement, the opportunities for learning, and the prospects for the course being truly memorable are all high. The risks are also high any time the outcome of a course depends on something outside of it, perhaps more so in the case of a scientific event that might or might not turn out as hoped and that might or might not conclude in a time frame that is convenient to the period in which the course is offered. With unpredictability comes the possibility of failure along with nagging questions about whether the students will like it and learn from it or whether the event under study will turn out in an interesting and productive way. In our course we attempted to mitigate these risks by being ready to adapt to any eventuality as the scientific event unfolded and by having enough supporting material that the course would be meaningful even if the event failed to live up to expectations. By designing the course to be interdisciplinary, we coupled the contemporary science of comets with coverage of comets in history and the history of astronomy as it relates to comets. Furthermore, we introduced opportunities to discuss some social, political, and philosophical dimensions of comets and comet research. Co-teaching the class helped to make this breadth of subject matter possible.

Any on-going scientific, political, economic, or sociological event could profitably be the focus of a course like this. An event that involves elements of a journey or that can be packaged as a journey of discovery would likely work best. If the timings work out with the rhythms of the semester, a journey gives a beginning-middle-end structure to the course and can create a sense of urgency and immediacy that in turn motivates student engagement with

the material. Some examples might include a course on geology centered on a mountain-climbing expedition or the progress of a Mars rover, a marine biology course that tracks the progress of a sailing voyage or a submersible mission to an ocean trench, or a course on meteorology that follows a trek to the pole or storm chasers during tornado season. Any such scientific mission will have news coverage and a website; most likely these days it will also have online educational resources, blogs, Facebook pages, webcams and live-Tweeting of the event as it progresses.

SOME PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

The title of the course, *Fire in the Sky: The Comet of the Century*, was borrowed from *Fire in the Sky* by Olsen and Pasachoff (1999), an elegant book about representations of comets and meteors in British art and literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Ultimately we decided this book was only tangentially related to the course as we intended to teach it and that we therefore could not ask the students to purchase it. In fact, we were unable to find any existing books that suited our purposes. We relied instead on Internet resources, including webpages, news articles, blogs and even Facebook, which happened to have a well-curated and administered ISON group page. These kinds of sources added to the cutting-edge feel of the course and appealed to the millennial generation's proclivity toward electronic media although, in the end, students probably read somewhat less than we might have preferred in an honors course. They didn't seem to mind. In any case, many of the students became so interested in the topics of the course that they did their own explorations on the Internet, often sharing with us good articles or websites they discovered. An additional and unexpected benefit of relying on blogs and social media for a good deal of the course material was that students got to see scientists struggling to interpret the data and arguing with each other about it, giving a truer picture of the tentative, confusing and messy process of doing science than one usually finds in the cleaned-up versions presented in textbooks.

One novel administrative move we tried was to cross-list the course under two different HNRS course numbers, one for humanities general education credit and the other for natural sciences general education credit. Given the truly interdisciplinary manner in which the course was structured and taught, this double listing was an appropriate way to attract a greater number and broader variety of students; had we offered it only for humanities credit, humanities majors might not have taken it, and had we offered it for natural

sciences credit, science and engineering majors would not have been able to take it. Unfortunately, this plan resulted in some snags given some baroque details of the general education program at Wichita State University; suffice it to say that our interpretation of the catalog was different from that of the advisors in one of the academic colleges, and they refused to count the course toward the requirement that one student had thought she was fulfilling. As we support that student's appeal to the Exceptions Committee, the honors program is exploring catalog changes in how its courses count toward general education so that this situation does not come up again.

Otherwise, the cross-listing strategy was indeed successful in attracting the number and breadth of students we were looking for. Another contributing factor to getting the enrollment we wanted was that we offered the course for upper-division rather than lower-division credit. In an era when a great many honors students enter the university with a large number of college credits, lower-division honors courses are becoming less popular.

SAMPLE TOPICS AND APPROACH

Our course covered a wide variety of topics, all tied in some way to comets. We discussed the development of astronomical theory from the ancient Greeks through the scientific revolution, in part to explain the interest and difficulty of doing astronomy and in part to illustrate how appearances of comets influenced crucial figures like Tycho Brahe and Johannes Kepler. Isaac Newton's theory of universal gravitation was an important topic to cover because it allowed us to discuss orbital mechanics and to introduce Halley's Comet, the periodic orbit of which Edmond Halley was first able to predict thanks to Newton's theory. After establishing the basic motions and fundamental structure of comets, we talked about other major comet appearances from the eighteenth through the twenty-first century, including the public reactions to those events. From the 1980s until the present, quite a few interesting space missions have imaged comets and even smashed spacecraft into them—Giotto, Deep Impact, and Stardust were just a few we discussed—and covering those space missions took us a couple of weeks. One of the guest lecturers we managed to schedule via Skype was the chief American scientist from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory on the joint European Space Agency/NASA Rosetta mission, which will land a probe on a comet in 2014. Although we happened to have a personal contact that helped make this possible, scientists on federally funded projects are generally required to do public outreach in order to meet the "broader impacts" requirement of their grants, so it is

worth asking. At least once a week we also gave an “ISON update,” reviewing the latest news about the comet, including a discussion by one of us (Ratcliffe) of locally photographed images of the comet. Sometimes the ISON update lasted ten minutes; sometimes it took the whole class period.

The class often felt like playtime; we joked with the students that we could not believe they were earning academic credit for having so much fun. In truth, though, the fun was an important part of the course, promoting both camaraderie among the students and attachment to the subject matter. It is easy to overlook this emotional component of learning, but, as we learned, including opportunities for it makes a significant difference. Along the same lines, we used the honors program’s funding to purchase t-shirts for all members of the class. The front of the shirt had the honors program logo while the back had the student-suggested slogan “Ask me about ISON” above a stylized picture of a comet. This small gesture, while not a serious expense for the honors budget, created a great deal of goodwill and excitement among the students while also providing some nice advertising for the honors program. For similar reasons, we took a break in the middle of the semester to watch the Bruce Willis movie *Armageddon* during class. The movie itself was even worse than we had remembered from seeing it at its release in 1998, but it gave the students an opportunity to apply what they had learned so far and give sophisticated critiques of everything the movie got wrong about comets and comet deflection.

OTHER THOUGHTS

We knew from the beginning that engaging students with the science was going to be an important aspect of the course. Fortunately, one of us (Ratcliffe) has a home observatory and therefore was able to invite the class to come view the comet for themselves. The fact that this viewing occurred very early on a very cold morning probably contributed to some class bonding. We were able to capture digital photographs of ISON and another comet (Comet Lovejoy) that happened to be in the morning sky at the same time as well as to look through a large telescope at Jupiter and its moons. A few students had sufficiently good eyesight that they were able to see a faint fuzzy patch when they pointed binoculars at Comet ISON.

Other instructors who try an interdisciplinary course like this one might not have access to a telescope of their own. However, on many campuses it should be possible to track down amateur stargazers or professors in the astronomy program who would be willing to share their time and expertise.

If the university operates an observatory, a visit should be possible. Other options for direct engagement with the science include local public observatories and planetariums. Courses not focused on astronomy could arrange laboratory tours in relevant sciences and/or trips to science centers, nature centers, or even a local Extension Office. Making this extra effort to engage the topic outside of the classroom is one way to make the course a true honors experience.

Another way we were especially fortunate was that one of us (Ratcliffe) had gone on observing trips to Kenya and Australia to photograph Halley's Comet in 1986 when he worked as a lecturer for the Armagh Planetarium and Observatory in Northern Ireland. His personal reflections, photographs, and observing logs added immeasurably to the students' appreciation of the excitement and difficulty in taking astronomical photographs of such faint and fleeting objects.

In an honors course built around coverage of a scientific event as it is happening, incorporating some history of science is a good idea. If the current event does not turn out as hoped, looking back to the history can provide context, suggest additional topics of discussion, and—let's face it—help fill the time left in the semester. The failure of a scientific experiment or idea can be turned into a valuable learning opportunity, affording an occasion to work through in detail, via a real-life application, how science actually works: it shows how scientists adapt to new information, setbacks, and observations that contradict prior expectations; it shows how theories, assumptions, questions and answers can all change over rather short time scales in the face of new data and theoretical developments; and it provides a lesson in the capriciousness of the natural world and of the scientific process. Besides painting a better picture of how science works, valuable in itself and an inspiration for students to try out some undergraduate research of their own, the possibility of failure encourages students to be circumspect in expressing hopes for how research might turn out.

THE MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

One of the interesting features of comets is that they sometimes collide with other solar-system bodies, including planets. Our course included discussion of the impact of the twenty-one fragments of Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 with the planet Jupiter, including the images taken by the Hubble Space Telescope that were released to the public more or less as the impacts were happening, a scientific first that captivated the public in 1994. This discussion

allowed us to raise the theme of the public communication and reception of science, which became part of a signature assignment later in the course (see below). The Chelyabinsk meteor that exploded in the skies over Russia on February 15, 2013, the impressive effects of which were recorded by many video devices and were posted widely on social media, provided a nice segue to discussion of Earth impacts. These included the Tunguska Event (an atmospheric explosion in 1908 that flattened 2,000 km² of remote Russian forest that was attributed to the impact of an asteroid or comet) and the Chicxulub crater (the remnant on the Yucatan peninsula of the asteroid or comet impact sixty-six million years ago that likely caused the dinosaur extinction). There is also some speculation that most of Earth's water was delivered by comet impacts in the very distant past.

These impact stories led us to current proposals that humans need to build robust “detect and deflect” schemes for so-called Near Earth Objects that could potentially impact the Earth. The proponents of such schemes talk about “city killers” and “civilization enders” and argue that, while the odds of such an impact in the immediate future might be low, it will inevitably happen again at some time in the future, and they suggest that it would be a wise investment to build such schemes now in order to be ready to prevent the end of civilization if we can. As it turned out, the United Nations held a conference to discuss potential asteroid and comet impacts on Earth in the middle of the semester in which we taught the course, a coincidence that helped turn what might have seemed a merely academic discussion into a study that had real-world relevance.

The topic of Near Earth Objects probably includes enough material by itself for an honors course. We touched on such matters as the science of impacts; ways to detect astronomical bodies that could hit the Earth; ways to deflect or destroy such potential impactors; the ethics of trying/not trying such schemes; the public funding of science; the politics related to national governments, international organizations, or private groups taking responsibility for dealing with such a global threat; and how the answer we give about dealing with Near Earth Objects should shape our responses to other kinds of global threats such as poverty, pandemics, and climate change.

Given the large number of diverse sub-topics relating to Near Earth Objects, we had an ideal opportunity to make this section of the course the students' responsibility to research and present. They worked individually or in pairs on parts of the topic and then made a whole-class presentation during which each person or team reported on the sub-topic they had researched.

In preparation, the students met together outside of class for several hours on several occasions. During these meetings they assigned sub-topics, discussed presentation strategies, compared research notes, asked each other questions, and planned the presentation itself. Each student thus became an expert on a sub-topic, became familiar with the other topics, and got practice working in teams. The next class period after the long presentation was devoted in its entirety to a free-form discussion in which the students, with some tough Socratic questioning by the instructors, tried to decide the question of whether or not the United States ought to use taxpayer funds to build a “detect and deflect” program for Near Earth Objects. This class was originally conceived as an Oxford-style formal debate, but during the preparation period the concept evolved so that instead it ultimately resembled the kind of discussion that an expert panel at the National Science Foundation might hold to decide an important strategic question about what kinds of scientific projects to prioritize for funding. In all, this assignment was very successful, one that we would repeat again in similar form in other classes. In general such an assignment would work well in any course structured around a current scientific episode since the question of the public funding of science can be raised in relation to any specific science.

Earlier in the course, after completing the section on the history of astronomy, we asked each of the students to choose a unique “comet in history,” research it, and give a five-minute presentation about it. We held several presentations at the beginning of each of four consecutive class periods so that not just the instructors were presenting all the time, the students got comfortable with talking in class, and we could cover material that might have seemed somewhat repetitive had the instructors presented it all.

The other major assignment, due at the end of the semester, was an analysis in essay form of popular accounts of Comet ISON. Here is the assignment prompt we used:

This assignment challenges your analytical and critical skills as applied to the topic of “communicating science to the educated but non-expert public” with specific reference to the popular news coverage of Comet ISON. Find three popular articles about Comet ISON, from its initial discovery to now. (Completing the assignment may be easier if you choose longer rather than shorter target articles. In your list of sources, give full citation information including a URL if available.) Analyze each article in turn; comparing and contrasting them among themselves is acceptable but is not required. Go into

detail about the strong and weak points of each article. Consider such factors as accuracy, sensationalism, relevance, clarity, level of explanation, ways the author generates and sustains interest, word choice, writing level, the use of metaphors and analogies, the use of story, the use of quotations and expert testimony, the use of images and illustrations—or any other factor that is relevant to judging the quality of the work.

The papers we received from the students were of good quality and were genuinely interdisciplinary. Humanities students were able to apply their skills in textual analysis to a topic area with which they had had limited previous experience, and natural science/engineering students had an opportunity to reflect on effective ways of communicating technical information to non-expert audiences. We also offered a bonus assignment in which students were asked to write their own 500–1000 word article explaining Comet ISON to a popular audience. Only a few students had time at the end of the semester to complete the bonus assignment, but the ones who did so turned in nearly publishable work. If we were to offer such a course again, we would make this a regular assignment rather than a bonus assignment, and we would place it earlier in the semester.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

At the end of the semester we stopped to marvel what luck it was that Comet ISON reached perihelion on Thanksgiving Day, with just two class periods left in the semester. The comet fizzled. It was brightening wonderfully as it approached the Sun but then started fading just before it disappeared behind the occulting disk of the SOHO spacecraft that was recording its journey. It emerged from perihelion as a mere puff with no bright central nucleus. We had some moments of excitement later when it seemed to brighten again, but the online articles about a “zombie comet” back from the dead turned out to have been overstated. Still, the open discussion and disagreement between experts on the ISON Facebook page revealed the real human process of science in a way no textbook could have conveyed. After its closest approach to the Sun, ISON never became bright enough to see with the naked eye, let alone to be considered the comet of the century. We were in touch by email with our students throughout the day while all this was happening, and several of them were quite distraught by the turn of events.

What would we have done had we built the course around a comet that had fizzled a month or two earlier in the semester? The truth is that the course would have gone well anyway, with more than enough comet-related material to fill a semester. Some of the excitement of anticipation would have been lost, but the opportunities for learning would have been just as good. For example, had the comet fizzled earlier in the semester, we could have spent more time on impact threats, space mission design, and understanding the origins of the solar system as well as on literary and artistic responses to comets and the social/political stories to which they become attached. Also, since there is often more than one comet in the sky, we could have given more attention to other current or recent comets.

Before we left for Thanksgiving break, we took a class opinion survey about how ISON would perform. None of us voted that it would fizzle although we all recognized that the possibility existed. In the class period after Thanksgiving, we were able to use our survey results to talk about how biases can skew scientific predictions.

This course was a peak experience for both the instructors and the students. Part of its success can no doubt be attributed to the high degree of prior interest in the subject that the instructors and students shared. The instructors' enthusiasm for the material surely did help motivate the students, and the uncertainty of the comet's fate made this science story more immediate and interesting than some other topics might have been. Other contributions to the success of the course were the opportunities for fun, for students to take responsibility for teaching part of the course themselves, for assignments that required deep engagement with the content while working together with other students, and for meaningful out-of-class experiences related to the material. We recommend such opportunities for any honors course. However, the most important factor contributing to the success of our course was that it engaged a significant real-life event, while it was happening, from an interdisciplinary perspective that made the experience richer. This approach could fruitfully be applied in fields of study that range from business and engineering to politics and sociology, not just the hard sciences.

For anyone considering a comet course of their own, Comet C/2013 A1 (Siding Spring) will make a very close approach to Mars on October 19, 2014, and the Rosetta mission will land a probe on the Comet 67P (Churyumov-Gerasimenko) in November, 2014.

REFERENCE

Olsen, Roberta J. M., and Jay M. Pasachoff. (1999). *Fire in the Sky: Comets and Meteors, the Decisive Centuries, in British Art and Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

HIP NOW

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Melissa L. Johnson serves as the associate director of the University of Florida Honors Program as well as an affiliate faculty member for the Bob Graham Center for Public Service. She is a member of the NCHC Board of Directors and co-chair of the Professional Development Committee.

Deirdre D. Ragan is the incoming honors program director and teaches in the mechanical engineering department at The Citadel. Her interests include student mentoring, universal design for learning, specialty materials, and renewable energy.

Jennie Woodard is currently a lecturer in the University of Maine Honors College, where she teaches first- and second-year courses. Her research interests are film, sports, and popular culture. She is also an instructor in the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program.

HIP THEN

Bernice Braid, NCHC past president, Fellow, and inaugural Founder's Award recipient, is Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature at Long Island University Brooklyn, where she designed cross-disciplinary curricula for the University Honors Program and directed the program for thirty-seven years. She was one of the founders of NCHC's Honors Semesters, into which she introduced City as Text™ to be the integrative field-based seminar in 1981. She continues to experiment with, write about, and facilitate faculty workshops and institutes on experiential learning strategies for liberal education.

Frederick J. Conway was in 2006 a lecturer in the Department of Anthropology at San Diego State University. He had research interests in natural resources in Chile and visited the Honors Program at the Universidad Austral de Chile in 2004 and 2005, the second time to assist with an evaluation of the program.

Joan Digby has been involved in honors education for the lifetime of a mule, and she has worked as hard as this animal as well as all the cats and horses she cares for as if they were her students. Her most recent teaching focuses on sustainable environment and literature related to the human connection to nature. She is a past president of NCHC, a former chair and still member of the Publications Board, and the originator of Partners in the Parks, to which she is passionately committed.

Don Dingledine is Associate Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, where he teaches courses in American literature (including a seminar on *Moby-Dick*) and a Writing-Based Inquiry Seminar on the American Civil War. As honors faculty, he also teaches literature, composition, and interdisciplinary courses across the curriculum for the Honors College at UW Oshkosh. He received his PhD in American literature from Temple University and has published on Stephen Crane, Rebecca Harding Davis, John William De Forest, and Ann Petry, as well as on the rock musical *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*.

Ted L. Estess is founding Dean of the Honors College at the University of Houston. He has served NCHC in a number of ways, including co-chairing the Beginning in Honors workshop with Sam Schuman for many years. Currently, he is Professor of English in the Houston Honors College, where he

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Michael Giazconi served as an academic advisor and Director of Fellowships at the Honors College of the University of Pittsburgh from 2002–2012. Unfortunately, after he left the Honors College, the Fessenden Honors in Engineering Program was retired. He now directs the university’s dual and concurrent enrollment office, College in High School.

Lauren Hundley graduated from the University of Florida College of Pharmacy in 2015. She completed a first-year residency at the Dorn VA Medical Center in Columbia, SC, and a second-year residency in pain and palliative care at the North Florida/South Georgia VA. She currently practices as a clinical pharmacy specialist in pain management at the Orlando VA.

Melissa L. Johnson is the associate director of the University of Florida Honors Program. She earned her PhD in educational technology in 2012, and her dissertation focused on early adopters of online learning in honors.

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Alexander S. Plattner graduated from the University of Florida Honors Program in 2013 with a bachelor’s degree in mathematics and biochemistry. He is currently an MD/MBA candidate at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, graduating in May 2018. After graduation he plans to pursue a residency in pediatrics.

Martin Ratcliffe is Adjunct Lecturer in the Emory Lindquist Honors Program at Wichita State University and Director of Professional Development at Sky-Skan, a planetarium company. He is a columnist for *Astronomy Magazine* and co-author of *Cosmology and the Evolution of the Universe*. When not traveling the world training planetarium staff, he teaches the honors courses “Big Bangs to Black Holes” and “Dynamic Astronomy.”

Samuel Schuman is a former president of NCHC, creator of the Beginning in Honors workshop, and author of *Beginning in Honors: A Handbook*. He is past Chancellor of the University of Minnesota, Morris. Among Sam’s publications are *Seeing the Light*, a study of contemporary religious colleges and universities; *Leading America’s Branch Campuses*, a collection of essays he edited for the ACE; and the NCHC monograph *If Honors Students Were People*, an exploration of holistic honors education. Sam died too young in 2014.

Carlos Alberto Cioce Sampaio in 2006 was a Post-Doctoral CAPES Fellow in Socioeconomics at the Universidad Austral de Chile. He was Coordinator at the Laboratory for the Management of Organizations which Promote Other Economy (LaGOE) of the Post-Graduate Program in Business Administration and Regional Development of the Universidade Regional de Blumenau.

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William L. Vanderburgh is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Wichita State University and Executive Director of the Office for Faculty Development and Student Success, the unit to which the Emory Lindquist Honors Program reports for now; in July 2014, it will become an honors college with its own dean. His main research area is the history and philosophy of science. item, accounted for 14% of students’ desired outcomes from studying abroad.

ABOUT THE NCHC MONOGRAPH SERIES

The Publications Board of the National Collegiate Honors Council typically publishes two to three monographs a year. The subject matter and style range widely: from handbooks on nuts-and-bolts practices and discussions of honors pedagogy to anthologies on diverse topics addressing honors education and issues relevant to higher education.

The Publications Board encourages people with expertise interested in writing such a monograph to submit a prospectus. Prospective authors or editors of an anthology should submit a proposal discussing the purpose or scope of the manuscript; a prospectus that includes a chapter by chapter summary; a brief writing sample, preferably a draft of the introduction or an early chapter; and a *curriculum vitae*. All monograph proposals will be reviewed by the NCHC Publications Board.

Direct all proposals, manuscripts, and inquiries about submitting a proposal to the General Editor of the Monograph Series:

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NCHC Monographs & Journals

Assessing and Evaluating Honors Programs and Honors Colleges: A Practical Handbook by Rosalie Otero and Robert Spurrier (2005, 98pp). This monograph includes an overview of assessment and evaluation practices and strategies. It explores the process for conducting self-studies and discusses the differences between using consultants and external reviewers. It provides a guide to conducting external reviews along with information about how to become an NCHC-Recommended Site Visitor. A dozen appendices provide examples of "best practices."

Beginning in Honors: A Handbook by Samuel Schuman (Fourth Edition, 2006, 80pp). Advice on starting a new honors program. Covers budgets, recruiting students and faculty, physical plant, administrative concerns, curriculum design, and descriptions of some model programs.

Fundraising for Honor\$: A Handbook by Larry R. Andrews (2009, 160pp). Offers information and advice on raising money for honors, beginning with easy first steps and progressing to more sophisticated and ambitious fundraising activities.

A Handbook for Honors Administrators by Ada Long (1995, 117pp). Everything an honors administrator needs to know, including a description of some models of honors administration.

A Handbook for Honors Programs at Two-Year Colleges by Theresa James (2006, 136pp). A useful handbook for two-year schools contemplating beginning or redesigning their honors program and for four-year schools doing likewise or wanting to increase awareness about two-year programs and articulation agreements. Contains extensive appendices about honors contracts and a comprehensive bibliography on honors education.

The Honors College Phenomenon edited by Peter C. Sederberg (2008, 172pp). This monograph examines the growth of honors colleges since 1990: historical and descriptive characterizations of the trend, alternative models that include determining whether becoming a college is appropriate, and stories of creation and recreation. Leaders whose institutions are contemplating or taking this step as well as those directing established colleges should find these essays valuable.

Honors Composition: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Practices by Annmarie Guzy (2003, 182pp). Parallel historical developments in honors and composition studies; contemporary honors writing projects ranging from admission essays to theses as reported by over 300 NCHC members.

Honors Programs at Smaller Colleges by Samuel Schuman (Third Edition, 2011, 80pp). Practical and comprehensive advice on creating and managing honors programs with particular emphasis on colleges with fewer than 4,000 students.

The Honors Thesis: A Handbook for Honors Directors, Deans, and Faculty Advisors by Mark Anderson, Karen Lyons, and Norman Weiner (2014, 176pp). To all those who design, administer, and implement an honors thesis program, this handbook offers a range of options, models, best practices, and philosophies that illustrate how to evaluate an honors thesis program, solve pressing problems, select effective requirements and procedures, or introduce a new honors thesis program.

Housing Honors edited by Linda Frost, Lisa W. Kay, and Rachael Poe (2015, 352pp). This collection of essays addresses the issues of where honors lives and how honors space influences educators and students. This volume includes the results of a survey of over 400 institutions; essays on the acquisition, construction, renovation, development, and even the loss of honors space; a forum offering a range of perspectives on residential space for honors students; and a section featuring student perspectives.

If Honors Students Were People: Holistic Honors Education by Samuel Schuman (2013, 256pp). What if honors students were people? What if they were not disembodied intellects but whole persons with physical bodies and questing spirits? Of course . . . they are. This monograph examines the spiritual yearnings of college students and the relationship between exercise and learning.

Inspiring Exemplary Teaching and Learning: Perspectives on Teaching Academically Talented College Students edited by Larry Clark and John Zubizarreta (2008, 216pp). This rich collection of essays offers valuable insights into innovative teaching and significant learning in the context of academically challenging classrooms and programs. The volume provides theoretical, descriptive, and practical resources, including models of effective instructional practices, examples of successful courses designed for enhanced learning, and a list of online links to teaching and learning centers and educational databases worldwide.

Occupy Honors Education edited by Lisa L. Coleman, Jonathan D. Kotinek, and Alan Y. Oda (2017, 394pp). This collection of essays issues a call to honors to make diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence its central mission and ongoing state of mind. Echoing the AAC&U declaration "without inclusion there is no true excellence," the authors discuss transformational diversity, why it is essential, and how to achieve it.

NCHC Monographs & Journals

The Other Culture: Science and Mathematics Education in Honors edited by Ellen B. Buckner and Keith Garbutt (2012, 296pp). A collection of essays about teaching science and math in an honors context: topics include science in society, strategies for science and non-science majors, the threat of pseudoscience, chemistry, interdisciplinary science, scientific literacy, philosophy of science, thesis development, calculus, and statistics.

Partners in the Parks: Field Guide to an Experiential Program in the National Parks by Joan Digby with reflective essays on theory and practice by student and faculty participants and National Park Service personnel (First Edition, 2010, 272pp). This monograph explores an experiential-learning program that fosters immersion in and stewardship of the national parks. The topics include program designs, group dynamics, philosophical and political issues, photography, wilderness exploration, and assessment.

Partners in the Parks: Field Guide to an Experiential Program in the National Parks edited by Heather Thiessen-Reilly and Joan Digby (Second Edition, 2016, 268pp). This collection of recent photographs and essays by students, faculty, and National Park Service rangers reflects upon PITP experiential-learning projects in new NPS locations, offers significant refinements in programming and curriculum for revisited projects, and provides strategies and tools for assessing PITP adventures.

Place as Text: Approaches to Active Learning edited by Bernice Braid and Ada Long (Second Edition, 2010, 128pp). Updated theory, information, and advice on experiential pedagogies developed within NCHC during the past 35 years, including Honors Semesters and City as Text™, along with suggested adaptations to multiple educational contexts.

Preparing Tomorrow's Global Leaders: Honors International Education edited by Mary Kay Mulvaney and Kim Klein (2013, 400pp). A valuable resource for initiating or expanding honors study abroad programs, these essays examine theoretical issues, curricular and faculty development, assessment, funding, and security. The monograph also provides models of successful programs that incorporate high-impact educational practices, including City as Text™ pedagogy, service learning, and undergraduate research.

Setting the Table for Diversity edited by Lisa L. Coleman and Jonathan D. Kotinek (2010, 288pp). This collection of essays provides definitions of diversity in honors, explores the challenges and opportunities diversity brings to honors education, and depicts the transformative nature of diversity when coupled with equity and inclusion. These essays discuss African American, Latina/o, international, and first-generation students as well as students with disabilities. Other issues include experiential and service learning, the politics of diversity, and the psychological resistance to it. Appendices relating to NCHC member institutions contain diversity statements and a structural diversity survey.

Shatter the Glassy Stare: Implementing Experiential Learning in Higher Education edited by Peter A. Machonis (2008, 160pp). A companion piece to *Place as Text*, focusing on recent, innovative applications of City as Text™ teaching strategies. Chapters on campus as text, local neighborhoods, study abroad, science courses, writing exercises, and philosophical considerations, with practical materials for instituting this pedagogy.

Teaching and Learning in Honors edited by Cheryl L. Fuiks and Larry Clark (2000, 128pp). Presents a variety of perspectives on teaching and learning useful to anyone developing new or renovating established honors curricula.

Writing on Your Feet: Reflective Practices in City as Text™ edited by Ada Long (2014, 160pp). A sequel to the NCHC monographs *Place as Text: Approaches to Active Learning* and *Shatter the Glassy Stare: Implementing Experiential Learning in Higher Education*, this volume explores the role of reflective writing in the process of active learning while also paying homage to the City as Text™ approach to experiential education that has been pioneered by Bernice Braid and sponsored by NCHC during the past four decades.

Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council (JNCHC) is a semi-annual periodical featuring scholarly articles on honors education. Articles may include analyses of trends in teaching methodology, articles on interdisciplinary efforts, discussions of problems common to honors programs, items on the national higher education agenda, and presentations of emergent issues relevant to honors education.

Honors in Practice (HIP) is an annual journal that accommodates the need and desire for articles about nuts-and-bolts practices by featuring practical and descriptive essays on topics such as successful honors courses, suggestions for out-of-class experiences, administrative issues, and other topics of interest to honors administrators, faculty, and students.

UReCA, *The NCHC Journal of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity*, is a web-based, peer-reviewed journal edited by honors students that fosters the exchange of intellectual and creative work among undergraduates, providing a platform where all students can engage with and contribute to the advancement of their individual fields. To learn more, visit <<http://www.nchc-ureca.com>>.

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